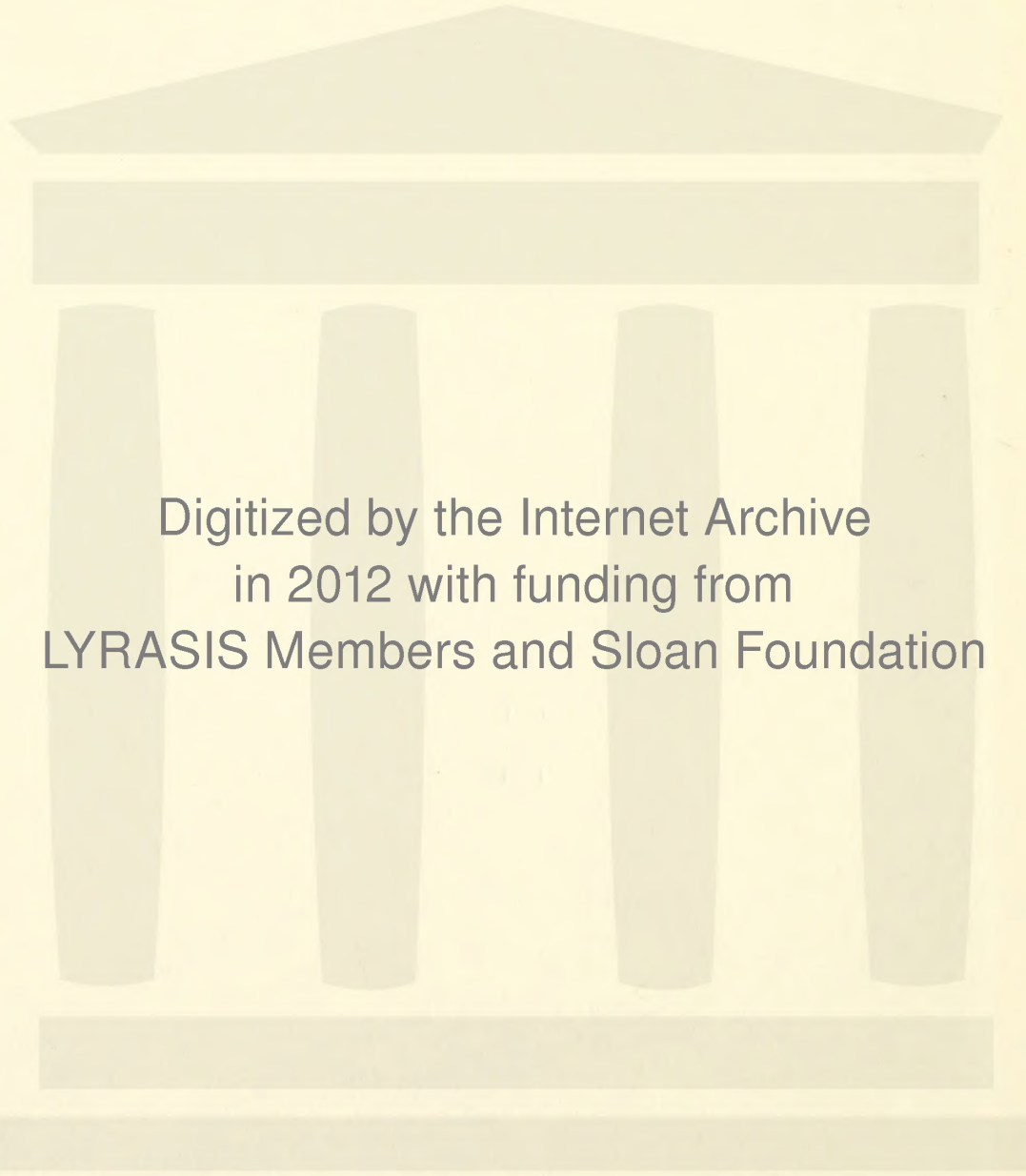


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SOMERSET PLACE AND ITS RESTORATION

Prepared For The
Department of Conservation and Development
Division of State Parks

BY WILLIAM S. TARLTON
August 1, 1954

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PREFACE

Pettigrew State Park, situated on the northeast shore of Lake Phelps in Washington and Tyrrell counties, North Carolina, embraces the dwelling sites of two nineteenth century plantations which were notable for size and for the efficiency of their organization and operation. Both plantations might be classed as typical of the larger plantations in coastal North Carolina and in the South generally.

By the time the park was established in the late 1930's one of these dwelling sites, that of the Pettigrew family, had so far deteriorated that there were no structural remains of the pre-Civil War period. The other site, that of the Collins family, retained an impressive proportion of the early buildings, including an imposing and notable mansion house dating from about 1830. Consequently it offered an attractive possibility for restoring a typical early plantation dwelling area. The North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, through its Division of State Parks, made the decision to undertake such a restoration and began to develop plans.

In the dwelling lot of Somerset Place, as the Collins plantation was called, the mansion and six neighboring outbuildings still stood, but beyond these structures there was little evidence of the original plan of the site. These buildings were repaired early in the project, but complete and authentic restoration of the buildings and grounds could not proceed further until full research on the site had been accomplished. In the fall of 1951 funds were provided for this purpose, and on October 1 of that year William S. Tarlton, a specialist in American history, was appointed to conduct this research. He remained on the project until July 31, 1954, during which time documentary and archeological research was completed and considerable restoration of buildings and

grounds was accomplished.

The following report incorporates Mr. Tarlton's research findings and his recommendations for the further development of the site. It includes a general historical account of the plantation and of the life of the Collins family, archeological data, and restoration plans. At the end is an appendix of documents and other material relating to the history and physical organization of the site.

Thomas W. Morse
Superintendent of State Parks

HISTORY OF THE LAKE COMPANY

The history of the old Lake Phelps plantations, of which Somerset Place was the largest, begins with the discovery of the lake about 1755. In that year, according to a tradition, a group of local hunters ventured into the dense swamp wilderness surrounding the lake to look for firm land for farming and to hunt. Soon most of the men turned back and the remaining members after several days, were about to return. At this point Benjamin Tarkinton climbed a tree and saw the lake a short distance away. The story is told that while Tarkinton was still up the tree his companion, Josiah Phelps, ran and got into the water first and thereby claimed the right to name it Lake Phelps.¹

The discovery of the lake was the first in a series of circumstances that led to the development of the surrounding swamp region. This whole area of perhaps 200,000 acres had been considered worthless for human enterprise and was labeled on old maps as "The Great Eastern Dismal", "The Great Alligator Dismal", and similarly. The swamp was so dense and fearsome that explorers, it was said, were deterred from entering its borders and it was commonly regarded as nothing but a "haunt of beasts." Beginning with the discovery of the lake, new knowledge gained about its interior led to a new appreciation and to practical development. In time a large part of the region was converted into a community of productive and prosperous plantations.

The hunters who found their way to the lake in 1755 discovered a considerable margin of high, firm land along the lake shore. But they

¹Major George P. Collins, "The Discovery of Lake Scuppernong (Phelps), North Carolina," in the Publications of the Southern History Association (Washington, D. C., 1902), Vol. VI, pp. 21-27.

also found that this arable land was impossible to reach except by foot. There were no water channels or dry land ridges leading in from the outside sufficient to serve as transportation routes. This lack of a satisfactory means of transportation delayed improvement of the region for about thirty years. The local people, small farmers and hunters, could not meet the expense of digging a long transportation canal or building a road through the swamps. These necessary and expensive improvements had to await the time when outside capital might be attracted. This began to happen during the early 1780's, just as the Revolution was coming to a close.

The earliest plan for opening the region was a scheme, worked out in the early 1780's by a group of Halifax and Edenton men, including William R. Davie, Allen Jones, Nathaniel Allen, and others, to drain the lake and farm the fertile bottom. In 1784 the General Assembly enacted a bill authorizing these men to proceed and allowing them a period of seven years for the project, during which time the land was to be exempt from taxes. It was known that the lake lay at a sufficiently high elevation to drain by gravity if a drainage channel were opened into it and, since the lake covered an area of nearly 17,000 acres, the expense of draining it seemed small in comparison to the advantages anticipated.²

This group made a survey but did not proceed further and nothing more is heard of their scheme. Instead, the survey revealed new facts about the larger swampland areas surrounding the lake which

²Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 24, p. 639.

gave a new direction to ideas for developing the region. Hugh Williamson, in his history of North Carolina, explains this matter and indicates the reasons for the shift in plans:

Their original object was to drain a lake that is eight or nine miles long, and nearly of the same breadth. Upon making a survey, it appeared that the water in the lake was three feet higher than the richest part of the swamp, and the surface of that swamp was seven feet higher than the water in the nearest river. By that survey it was discovered that they were in possession of an excellent rice swamp; above ten thousand acres in one body, that may be covered at pleasure with fresh water, eighteen inches or two feet deep.³

Josiah Collins, contrary to what Williamson indicates, appears not to have been a party to the scheme to drain the lake, but he entered the picture soon enough to be the main figure in the reclamation of swamplands. Nothing is known about the manner in which several of the members of the lake-draining scheme (William R. Davie, Allen Jones, James West Greene, and James Anderson) were eliminated and Collins added. But at about the same time, or very soon afterwards, that the one group was getting legislative authorization to drain the lake, Nathaniel Allen and Samuel Dickinson, Edenton members of that group, joined with Josiah Collins, also of Edenton, in a co-partnership to take up and develop the adjacent swamplands. Williamson indicates that the earlier group was superseded by the Collins group, but more likely it was simply a matter of two distinct groups of overlapping membership, functioning at the same time. The interests of the two groups conflicted, as one wanted to drain the lake and the other needed to keep it full for purposes of rice irrigation. One group defaulted for reasons that are not quite clear, allowing the other to proceed.

³Hugh Williamson, The History of North Carolina, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1812. Vol II, pp. 181-182.

The Lake Phelps region, even today, is indebted to the Lake Company, as the co-partnership of Collins, Allen and Dickinson was generally called (another name being simply, "Collins, Allen and Dickinson"). It was owing to the enterprise of this group, and particularly of Josiah Collins, that the first drainage works, the key to all later land reclamation in the area, were made possible. The work of the early Lake Company, as is noted elsewhere, also made it possible for the Pettigrew family to develop their plantations at the lake. The Lake Company's work was the beginning of the extensive Collins plantations, which, when added to the reclamations of the Pettigrews, completed before the Civil War the boundaries of improved farmland at Lake Phelps as they were to remain until the 1950's.

The Lake Company consisted of three of Edenton's most prominent men. Dr. Samuel Dickinson was a practising physician who also had varied and extensive business interests. Dr. Dickinson owned and occupied Edenton's famous Cupola House. Nathaniel Allen was the nephew of Joseph Hewes, bachelor politician and business magnate, whose money he had inherited in 1778. Later Allen moved to Ohio, where his son William became governor of that state, and a grandson, Allen Granberry Thurman, became a United States senator. The most substantial member of the company, as it turned out, was Josiah Collins.

Collins came to the colonies on the eve of the Revolution, in 1773. He first established himself at Providence, Rhode Island, staying there about a year. From Providence he came to Halifax, North Carolina, where he remained only briefly, and from Halifax to Edenton, where he settled permanently. In 1777 he organized

in Edenton a mercantile firm, of which he later became sole owner. Soon he acquired a rope walk formerly owned by Joseph Hewes, and with his son, Josiah, Jr., prospered as an early manufacturer of rope and cordage. His shipping interests were extensive, carrying his trade to the Indies, the Mediterranean, and the Orient. Commodore Edward Preble, of Barbary War fame, was his protege and served him as a ship captain. According to a family tradition, it was Collins who persuaded Preble to join the infant United States Navy, where he made a distinguished name for himself. "Captain" Collins, as he was called, was considered to be something of a financial wizard, and there is another family tradition that Washington considered him for the secretaryship of the Treasury in his first cabinet, the post that Alexander Hamilton accepted.⁴

According to a court representation of Josiah Collins, dated 1794, the co-partnership was a "verbal agreement," entered into by the three Edenton men some time prior to November 25, 1784. The objective of the partnership was "to enter and secure a large body of land around and bordering upon Lake Phelps...and as those lands were generally swamp and covered with water some months of the year, it was agreed that the Company should cut a canal from Scuppernong River to the said Lake...to drain the said Lands...and render them fit for culture and improvement." No set time was fixed for the duration of the partnership arrangement, but it was evidently agreed that it would last only so long as was necessary to complete the original and primary objects of acquiring the land and digging the Canal. According to Collins' paper⁵, the partners figured this would take about five years.

⁴Major George P. Collins, "Discovery of Lake Scuppernong."

⁵Josiah Collins, Amended Bill in Equity against Nathaniel Allen et. al., 1794 (Edenton District), Cupola House Manuscripts, in Cupola House, Edenton, N. C.

The company began its acquisitions of land immediately, both by patent and by the purchase of previously patented lands. By forty eight patents (Nos. 402-450), 101,438 acres were acquired; by purchase of lands from private owners, chiefly lands between the lake and the Scuppernong River, 8,540 acres were added, making a total of 109,978 acres.⁶ This was an estimated acreage. Other estimates of the patented lands ranged from 90,000 to 125,000 acres. In addition to the corporate holdings of the Lake Company, Josiah Collins held individual title to 60,000 acres lying to the east of the company lands on the Alligator River.⁷

Simultaneously with the purchase of the land, the company made preparations to dig the canal, the second primary object of the partnership. Collins wrote, "I went to Boston in the latter part of 1784 or early in 1785, among other matters of business to fit out the 'Guineaman'." This was the vessel that brought from Africa the slaves who dug the canal.⁸ The shipment of slaves brought over on the Guineaman probably numbered over a hundred, as by the 1790 census, 113 slaves are listed for the Lake Company.⁹ This figure takes account of the increase since the slaves were acquired, but not of the deaths since 1784, which were probably numerous during the period of acclimatization.

⁶Chowan County (N.C.) Deeds, Bk. W, pp. 679-680. Register of Deeds Office, Edenton.

⁷Tyrrell County (N.C.) Deeds, Bk. 13, pp. 132-133. Register of Deeds Office, Columbia.

⁸Quoted by Maj. George P. Collins in "Discovery of Lake Phelps". See also Josiah Collins, Bill of Complaint in Equity against Nathaniel Allen et al., 1790 (Cupola House MSS.) Collins relates that the Company "did fit out and equip a Vessel to the Coast of Africa for the purpose of purchasing Slaves..."

⁹State Records of North Carolina, XXVI, 1790 census.

The slaves were put to work on the canal and in 1788 it was completed.¹⁰ This channel was dug on a straight course a distance of six miles, linking the river with the lake. It was finished to a width of 20 feet and a depth ranging between four and six feet. The cost was reported to be \$30,000.¹¹

In all respects the operations of the Lake Company proceeded encouragingly. "...The Company had the satisfaction of seeing the first objects of the Co-partnership completed in such a manner as to exceed their expectations: Ninety Thousand Acres of Land and upwards were purchased and secured to the Company, and in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight the Canal was also finished." With the primary objects thus achieved, the way led to further improvements: "a Saw and Grist Mill should be raised on the Canal and some lands cleared and cultivated in Rice, and a Rice machine built by way of additional improvements..." So, by 1794,

two excellent Sawmills have been erected, a Rice machine and a Grist Mill for the present use of the Plantation have been built; Lands have been cleared and somewhat improved, more indeed than the present number of hands are able to work to advantage of the Concern; Crops of Rice have been made, a large warehouse, Barn, Dwelling Houses and others necessary for the accomodation of the Overseers and Negroes, and saving and securing the Crops have also been built.

For all the improvements thus far made, the company had expended £40,000.¹²

An advertisement in the Edenton Gazette, of Feb. 11, 1791, offer-

¹⁰ Josiah Collins, Amended Bill of Complaint in Equity against Nathaniel Allen, et al., 1794. Cupola House MMs.

¹¹ Josiah Collins, Amended Bill in Equity, 1794.

¹² Josiah Collins, Ammended Bill in Equity, 1794. Cupola House MSS.

ing lumber for sale at the company sawmill, illustrates both the speed with which the company proceeded with production and the early utilization of forest resources as a part of the Lake Phelps plantation economy. In the long run the production of lumber, staves, and shingles provided one of the main factors of profit on all the plantations.

NOTICE

The subscribers take this method to inform the public, that they have completed their SAWMILLS at their canal, on Scuppernong River, where they have for sale a quantity of excellent Cypress Plank and Scantling, which they will dispose of on reasonable terms, and where orders for house frames and all kinds of Saw Mill Timber will be executed at the shortest notice.

Those who wish to purchase may apply to Mr. Thomas Trotter, at the Mills, or either of the subscribers, in this town. The lumber will be delivered at the mouth of the Canal, where any vessel with an easy draught of water may take in her full cargo.

Collins,
Allen and Dickinson

Edenton, January 10, 1791.

In his history of North Carolina, published in 1812, Hugh Williamson both pointed to the particular success of the Lake Company and to the significance of their experiment in reclaiming swamplands:

By finishing the canal, and erecting three or four mills, that are turned by the waters of the lake, and by raising a few crops of rice and wheat, they have shown that lands, formerly of little value, may be made the most profitable lands in the state. The rice produced on these lands is not exceeded in quality by any rice in Georgia or South Carolina.^{12a}

The sawmills, as well as the other mills and the barns, were located on the canal about a quarter of a mile from the lake

^{12a}Williamson, History of North Carolina, II, p. 182.

shore at the point where the canal completed its sharpest descent from the Lake. A control gate at the mills made it possible to keep up a six foot head of water to turn the water wheels. Traces of the sluiceways and the high enbankments that contained the water head are to be seen there today. Flat boats operated on the canal to carry lumber, grain, and other freight to and from the river.

The prime importance of the canal in the story of Lake Phelps land development can hardly be over emphasized. The canal's function was manifold. One use was as the main drainage channel, for which there was no natural substitute. A network of cross ditches fed the rainwater from the reclaimed land into the canal, which channeled it to the river below. The canal and cross ditch system also channeled off overflow water from the lake when in times of flood the lake overflowed and inundated the farmland. A second major use was for transportation. The canal bore extensive boat traffic (all heavy freight to and from the plantation passed on the canal) and its banks served as excellent roadbeds, which were always carefully maintained for wheeled traffic. Since the canal in its higher levels near the lake ran dry when the flow of the lake water was cut off, it was necessary to maintain a full flow from the lake when it was desired to operate boats on it.

The canal's secondary uses were almost as important as the primary. It was a key part of the irrigation system for rice culture. Passing from lower-lying lands to the higher level of the lake, it received lake water and carried it by flow to the rice fields where the cross ditches received it and carried it to the rice plots. When the time came to dry the fields, the gate at the lake was closed to cut off the flow there and the water on the fields was allowed to pass into the canal and thence to the river, laying the fields dry again.

As already noted, the canal near the lake was readily adaptable to the production of water power to operate machinery.

The great variety of machinery at Lake Phelps was particularly impressive to visitors. Edmund Ruffin, the well known Virginia agricultural editor and reformer, visited the plantations twice and took much interest in the use of water power. His description of the mechanical arrangements at the Somerset Place mills, written in 1838, is as follows:

The extensive use made of water to save labor on this estate, is one of the most interesting subjects of our observation...Part of this power works a saw mill, and a corn and wheat mill of two pair of stones, with the bolting, and other machinery, &c., proper for the making of flour. Also the corn is shelled and fanned, and, though not now, formerly the wheat was thrashed, and cleaned by the water-power, conducted to the barn and one of the great corn houses. Besides these more important operations, and for some of which there is daily use made of the water-power, it is also directed to crushing and grinding corn in the ear for the horses and other stock, the working a circular saw, turning grindstones, and may be substituted for hand labor in various ways. When it is desired to prepare a cargo of corn for the Charleston market, there is no need of commencing until notice has been received of the vessel having arrived in the river below. The shelling of the corn is then commenced, by a shelling machine of immense power, then fanned, next lifted up by elevating machinery, from the first to the fourth story of the house, there measured, and then emptied through a spout into a large flat boat lying in the canal, which, as soon as loaded in bulk, is conveyed along the canal to the vessel. Thus the risk of keeping a large quantity of shelled corn in bulk is avoided, and, by the aid of water, all the operations necessary to load a vessel may be completed in a very short time.¹³

Willie P. Mangum's reaction to this and other sights afforded by a visit to the plantation in 1820 is characteristic of the casual visitor. In a letter to his wife he related that,

¹³The Farmers' Register (Petersburg, Va.), Vol. VII (1839).

Yesterday I came to see Lake Phelps and am now in the residence of a private gentlemen within 35 feet of its brink --here is the finest estate in North Carolina. Sixty three thousand Acres of land in one body as rich as the banks of the Nile a canal of 6 miles in length and 20 feet wide emptying the waters of the lake in Scuppernong River...On the canal there is the greatest variety of useful and ingenious machinery that I have ever seen-¹⁴

It was to such remarkable developments as these that the early work of the Lake Company led. But, although the company's land improvements proceeded without hindrance, there developed a great deal of confusion in the internal affairs of the organization. This confusion was finally resolved by Josiah Collins assuming sole ownership of the company properties and making of them a private estate. Probably this was a development that Collins did not anticipate when he, with his partners, first undertook the land project, evidently as a speculative investment. This part of the company's history is a complicated and tedious phase of litigation and often unclear business adjustments.

The root of the matter seems to have been that, although the three partners were supposed to share equally in the company's expenses and then settle the business in such a way that each partner individually could take out his share of the investment, they did not do so. Collins paid in more than his partners, and Dr. Dickinson in particular lagged far behind and became indebted to Collins. As the partners' interests grew more and more out of balance Collins pressed for a settlement of the company's affairs, but his partners were reluctant to make a settlement. Collins thereupon entered a suit in equity to compel them. His original bill of complaint was entered in 1790, but the case became com-

¹⁴Willie P. Mangum to Charity A. Mangum, Sept. 10, 1820. Henry T. Shanks, The Papers of Willie Person Mangum, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, 1950. Vol. I, p. 30.

plicated by the introduction of cross complaints by his partners, and the court did not order a settlement. Collins complicated the matter further in 1793 by answering his partners' cross bill in such a way that the court ruled it was "scandalous", a term having special meaning in law. In 1794 Collins, through Thomas Iredell, master of the court, sought to remove this opprobrium and at the same time presented an amended bill of complaint, bringing his position up to date from 1790, the date of the original bill.

This amended bill is rich in the history of the Lake Company up to that time, supplying our best information about the company's early operations. Collins ended his representation with the plea that since he was advanced in age and had large sums tied up in the company "to the injury of his other business...; and as his family now required different arrangements of his property for their support and settlement in life, and as the creditors...had made pressing demands upon him for the discharge of his private debts," he most earnestly desired the court to order a final settlement.

In response to this representation the court ordered an examination of the company's books as a basis for further action. Examination of the books was made periodically and reports were made to the court. The report filed in April, 1795, showed that Dr. Dickinson owed Collins over 4,600 pounds and Allen owed him more than 50 pounds.¹⁵ The rest of the suit is

¹⁵These facts are from court papers in the Cupola House MSS, Edenton, in a folder labeled "Collins, Allen and Dickinson."

lost to view and cannot be followed further, except to say that the court did not order a settlement. The partners held their shares and it was through a process of purchase that Collins finally resolved his problem.

This process began in 1794 with Dr. Dickinson giving Francis Peyrinnaut, a merchant of Edenton, a mortgage on one half of his entire Lake Company interest. In 1798 he made this half interest over to Peyrinnaut in fee simple.¹⁶ Peyrinnaut held it until 1801, when he sold it to Collins for \$7,764.50.¹⁷ In 1801 Dickinson mortgaged the remainder of his interest, and probably lost control of a part of that before his death. In 1810 Josiah Collins, Jr. bought from the Dickinson heirs their remaining interest for \$5,000.¹⁸ In the meantime Collins also proceeded to buy up the Allen shares. In 1803 Allen placed his title in jeopardy by granting to John and Joseph Skinner a mortgage on his entire interest.¹⁹ In the same year he gave Collins what appears to have been a second mortgage to secure a sum of \$8,625.15.²⁰ In 1816 Collins bought all of Allen's interest at an executor's sale.²¹

¹⁶Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 12, pp. 361-362.

¹⁷Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 12, pp. 506-507.

¹⁸Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 13, pp. 157-158.

¹⁹Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 12, p. 578.

²⁰Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 12, p. 581.

²¹Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 15, pp. 352-358.

THE COLLINS FAMILY AT "SOMERSET PLACE"

After he had bought up the interests of his partners, Collins began to develop the lake plantation according to his personal tastes and inclinations as a family estate. Symbolizing this new turn, he named the plantation "Somerset Place" in honor of the county in England where he was born. Not much concrete information is available about the improvements he made during the next few years, but it is apparent from records of the neighboring Pettigrew family that he and his son, Josiah Jr., gave the plantation more of their personal attention than formerly. A manager was still in actual charge, as had been the case before, but the Collinses developed a habit of spending more time at the lake, partly to keep an eye on business and partly to enjoy the pleasures of the lake situation. Sometimes these visits took the form of family outings, with the women, children, and assorted guests coming along.

The main business of the family, and their residence, remained in Edenton, but it was anticipated that members of the younger generation would make their homes at the lake. It was definitely planned that the eldest grandson should do so. In accord with these expectations, the elder Josiah Collins provided in his will for seven of his grandchildren to have estates at the lake. At his death in 1819 he left all the lake property to his son, Josiah, Jr., for the duration of his life, after which it would be divided into seven parcels of nearly equal size and assigned to the seven children of Josiah, Jr. By a map appended to the will the disposition is made clear. Josiah III, eldest son of Josiah, Jr., was to receive Somerset Place proper and the other children were to inherit undeveloped lands. This arrangement was in

accord with the primogeniture custom of the day, which had lingered in practice despite the fact that its legal basis had been removed. By this will the seven grandchildren were also to receive \$5,000 in cash as they each came of age.²²

Josiah Collins, Jr. operated the plantation till his son, Josiah III, came of age. The young Josiah, born in 1808, attended Harvard and a law school at Litchfield, Connecticut. In 1829, at the age of 21, he finished his education and married Miss Mary Riggs of New Jersey. It was arranged that he should come directly to Somerset Place and make his residence there. During the preceding few years his father had made preparations by building a new dwelling house and making other improvements. The Pettigrews, now well established at their neighboring plantation, watched developments at Somerset Place with great interest. Their comments, appearing in letters and other personal papers of the period, provided the little information we have about the early years of Collins residence at the lake.

Ebenezer Pettigrew, the essence of prudence and devotion to duty, and perhaps grown a bit captious by virtue of a long supremacy in the backward neighborhood, was suspicious of the doings of his neighbors. Mrs. Pettigrew exhibited much the same concern. The following excerpts from Pettigrew letters are sketchily informative about the doings of the Collins family but are vividly informative as to what the Pettigrews thought of the Collinses:

²²Will of Josiah Collins, Sr., 1819. Chowan County Wills, Clerk's Office, Edenton. Bk. C., pp. 73-76.

Mrs. Pettigrew in 1824 -

Several of the [Collins] family spent last week on the lake, they said very much to their satisfaction. They are indeed very dressy, they appear to have been delighted with their visit to New Bern. So gay, so hospitable, what a place for rich people this New Bern is.²³

In 1825 -

Mr. and Mrs. Collins were on a visit to the Lake and spent a day with us, she bids fair to be a monstrous large woman, talked a deal of Mrs. Govan - wedding &c - which is a stale subject.²⁴

In 1828

The Madam & Misses Collinses are on the Lake, appear to be much pleased with it, [financial] interest, what a powerful stimulus. There is a Dr. Page also visiting them here, from Virginia, probably on a courting expedition....²⁵

Ebenezer Pettigrew in 1826 -

Mr. Collins [Josiah, Jr.] was with [us] last week....I went to see him the second morning after his arrival. I found him very clever and conversant. He inveighs stoutly against the present fashionable life, he says nothing can stand a party every night and then sleeping until ten in the morning. He also gave a bad account of some of our friends across the water [the Sound].²⁶

In 1828

Mr. Collins [Josiah, Jr.] came to the Lake fryday before Christmas and yet continues. He is receiving the Plantation from Mr. Carraway who leaves the Lake this day. Mr. Collins expects to stay here a great part of his time....I have had a good deal of conversation with him and he has asked me a great many questionsI cannot but feel an interest in the welfare of the place, and am disposed to give my opinion to the best of my judgment, but shall nevertheless feel nothing if it shall be overruled. I have no desire to direct its destinies.²⁷

...agriculture I had forced on me and 25 years employment at the business has taught me all its troubles, and alas they are great.

²³Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan, April 20, 1824. John H. Bryan Collection, State Department of Archives and History. Raleigh.

²⁴Mrs. Pettigrew to Mrs. Bryan, July, 1825. Bryan Collection.

²⁵Mrs. Pettigrew to Mrs. Bryan, Feb. 19, 1828. Bryan Collection.

²⁶Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew, December 5, 1826. Pettigrew Family Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

²⁷Ebenezer Pettigrew to James C. Johnston, Jan. 1, 1828. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

...You have frequently heard me complain of the management over the way [at Somerset Place]. Since Mr. Carraway [the overseer] has quit here all my predictions have been fully verified. Mr. Collins who has staid on the Lake the greater part of the year and attends a great deal in person, is out of all patience with ? ? ? ? He says he had better for the last five years have paid Mr. Car[raway] his \$800 and never let him in the time come on the place; in truth he is clearly of opinion that neglect would justify a suit for damage. He says the negroes are corrupted and everything is out of order without a single exception. This bad opinion Mr. Collins has formed of Mr. Carraway is not from what he has heard...but from what he has been obliged to see, such as not a whole plough when he goes to work in the spring, rotten and falling down [mill] races and not a single plank or post to repair them &c &c &c Flats too rotten to transport the thin crop down the canal and not a single plank in the yard to renew them - they had to resort to the Bridges in the field for it.²⁸

Old Mr. Collins (Josiah, Jr.) stayed at the lake the better part of the year 1828, working diligently to set the place in order for his son who would soon come to take over. Mrs. Pettigrew gives us a view of the preparations that were made:

Mr. Collins has been on the Lake the greater part of this year without his family. They have not yet returned from their Northern visit. He seems to enjoy the loneliness of this place - such is the effect of age, he is very unlike his family - they are gay and fond of the world. I suppose next year his son will take possession, they have increased the number of slaves and houses and find their overseers so faithless that they must give their personal attention, the only alternative for farmers. The education of the son will cause him to pass many a wretched hour, it will be very unlike New York, the opera and amusements of various kinds which that great city affords.²⁹

The marriage of Josiah III, which presaged so much change in the Lake Phelps neighborhood, took place on August 9, 1829. The bride was Miss Mary Riggs, daughter of the late Caleb S. Riggs, Esq., of Newark.³⁰ The marriage was the cue for increased acti-

²⁸Ebenezer Pettigrew to _____, [1828]. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

²⁹Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan Oct. 20, 1828. Bryan Collection.

³⁰Marriage notice in Edenton Gazette, Aug. 25, 1829.

vity at Somerset Place, with the bridegroom's parents and sisters spending more time there than usual, apparently to get the place in order for the newlyweds' arrival early in January, 1830. The Pettigrews observed these preparations and the changing scene with obvious excitement. For a time it seemed they had succumbed to the charms of their neighbors. But as he became better acquainted, Ebenezer's attitude soured visibly. His letters record his shifting mood:

Mrs. Pettigrew as well as myself are very much gratified at the alteration made in our society on the Lake. It is a great affair to have in your neighborhood well bred persons who stand on honor and character. That we shall get along in peace there can be no doubt. Our interests cannot clash in any shape, and if I know my own heart, I feel a very strong disposition that the place should thrive, but the young gentlemen's habits of society, and his associates being of the first circle in the nation, forbid that I could be company for him long at a time or very often. In truth their stay in this out of the way place cannot be to enjoy the society of any one. The reason must be obvious. I hope no one has been taught his station and knows it better than I do.³¹

Mrs. Pettigrew, visiting again with the Collins women, wrote her sister:

On Saturday last I had a visit from my neighbors, we walked to the mound, an elevation for a burying ground from the top of which we have a pretty view of the plantation. Walking is very fashionable with us, it is an admirable way of killing time for our neighbors. They do not say so. They admire the country and everything appertaining to it, so it seems. Tomorrow, the weather permitting, Mrs. Collins, the young ladies and myself are going to spend a few days with Aunt Pettigrew [at Belgrade]. I shall carry four troublesome children and you may judge how much pleasure I shall have.³²

The Pettigrews felt that living at the lake would prove unbearably lonely for the newlyweds, as it almost had been for themselves:

³¹Ebenezer Pettigrew to James C. Johnston, January 13, 1829. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

³²Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan, April 5, 1829. Bryan Collection.

"Bonarva is as lonely as ever. You can conceive of no place more so and 'Somerset Place', the name of Mr. Collin's is no better."³³ But if the young Collinsees, like the Pettigrews, should find life at the lake heavy, they would also discover the compensations the seasons brought: "Lake Phelps looks very pretty - green fields of wheat as far as the eye can reach - so luxuriant and refreshing to the eye when everything else presents the gloomy aspect of winter. We also have green yards and fine gardens - which is not the case in other places."³⁴

When young Collins arrived at Somerset Place with his bride early in January, 1830, Mrs. Pettigrew was not at home. Pettigrew called on the couple and related his visit in a letter to his wife, who was visiting relatives in New Bern:

The third evening after Mr. and Mrs. C's arrival I went over after tea; I found them very clever. Mrs. C. is certainly a very amiable woman, she desired her respects to you when I wrote. Mr. C. was here an hour last evening. Understanding that I would have a great deal to do next week, he offered to assist in anything....The young man expressed a wish last evening that his two brothers would settle on the Lake, but I think the building of his new house is laid by for a season.³⁵

This is an obvious reference to the building of the mansion house at Somerset Place, the house now to be seen there. This reference also gives the best date we have as to the time of its construction, which must have been shortly after 1830. The family had been occupying the smaller and older dwelling house, now known as the

³³Mrs. Pettigrew to Mrs. Bryan, September 30, 1829. Bryan Collection.

³⁴Mrs. Pettigrew to Mrs. Bryan, March 9, 1830. Bryan Collection.

³⁵Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, January 17, 1830. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Colony, located nearby, and this was the house that Josiah Collins III and his wife moved into when they arrived at the lake. But it was not large enough, apparently, and young Josiah began making plans to build a larger house. Mrs. Pettigrew, replying to her husband's letter, implied that the Pettigrews did not believe the young family would "stick" at the lake. She said, meaning Collins, "A certain man will not build as I predicted...."³⁶ Pettigrew was already inclined to criticize the young man's management of plantation business, censoring him for being absent from the farm at a critical season. "I hear from Ben [a Pettigrew slave] that Mr. J. Collins Jun and Lady stayed at Mothers [Mrs. Mary Pettigrew] last night, after an absence of 4 weeks wanting a day. Hogs not killed. Overseer not engaged, &c &c."³⁷ Pettigrew regarded his young neighbor as a dilettante planter. This went against his own austere grain.

In the spring of 1830 both Mrs. Pettigrew and Mrs. Collins approached childbed confinement, Mrs. Collins for the first time. Mrs. Pettigrew took note in womanly fashion of the manner in which Mrs. Collins bore her condition and wrote of the Collins' hurried departure for the North in order that the wife might be confined at home:

The Collins left the Lake last week for the North taking Ebenezer in the route where they spend a week. Mrs. Collins intended being confined here so I understood, for I am not in the family cabinet but heard through Dr. Warren, but all in a hurry they determined to go to the North. I think it will be necessary to make frequent stages - for the Madame looks as corpulent as I do and I think such a course would be mine - they will scarce arrive in time, I should suppose - she is a little delicate looking woman but not very easily alarmed with-

³⁶ Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mr. Pettigrew, January 23, 1830. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

³⁷ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, January 11, 1830. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

out a cause. I judge so by her riding about the farm so frequently in her situation.³⁸

While Mrs. Collins was away Mrs. Pettigrew died at the time of giving birth to her child. This tragedy was a terrible blow to her husband and he sought comfort where he could. As soon as the Collinses returned home, he went to see Mrs. Collins:

I have called on Mrs. Collins and sister. They did not receive me with a cruel and unfeeling smile. No they received me with a countenance which bespoke that they could weep with the weeping. I supported my feelings, though with an aching heart under the recollection of my former calls with that dear object of my love, until Mrs. C. spoke of her willingness to have little Mary, when I could support myself no longer.³⁹

Collins soon brought over presents for the little Pettigrew girls, now orphaned and living with their aunt, and this act of kindness further ingratiated Ebenezer Pettigrew with the Collinses, although for only a brief time.

These two families were drawn together in unreserved neighborliness only in times of tragedy and sorrow. At other times their relations were seldom unstrained. Through the Pettigrew papers it is possible to follow this subject further.

Christmas was the season of greatest festivity at Somerset Place. It was a season that brought joy to the blacks as well as pleasure and merrymaking to the whites. The negroes put their hearts into the John Cooner celebration and the whites devoted themselves to dance, song, and feasting. The Christmas season of 1829, marking the beginning of the Collins family's residence at

³⁸Mrs. Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan. Bryan Collection.

³⁹Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mary Shepard, November 19, 1830. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

the lake, impressed the Pettigrews and set the tone for future Christmases which brought a measure of fame to Somerset Place. Ebenezer Pettigrew reported that Dr. and Mrs. Warren dined with the Collinses, "And such stile the Dr. says he has before seen in a few instances, but such as I am sure I shall never be engaged in; They the C's were very clever, as much so as it was possible[.] though they dined at three o'clock they had coffee....All this needs no comment from me. I am an independent man. The young man and wife are expected tomorrow."⁴⁰ As late as January 5 they family was still engaged in holiday celebration, but still awaiting the arrival of the newlyweds.⁴¹

William S. Pettigrew, Ebenezer's second son, dined at Somerset Place several Christmases and then wrote disparagingly of the Collins hospitality. In 1846-47 he did not dine there as usual and took the occasion to write a family friend as follows: "I feel relieved of a burden now that I do not dine on Christmas day, or the day after, or at all, at my brother's [Charles L. Pettigrew] neighbor's. On such occasions all was ceremony and restraint; which was irksome to me, a plain, unpretending individual, who cannot easily adapt myself to the frivolity of fashionable people."⁴²

William S. Pettigrew's attitude, like the sour attitude of his father, was the outgrowth of a personal grudge. He had courted Collins' sister Alethia in the spring of 1845 and had made up his mind to ask for her hand. But the Collinses anticipated his plan and Collins himself was the one to inform Pettigrew that Miss Alethia rejected him.

⁴⁰ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, December 27, 1829. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁴¹ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, January 5, 1830, Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁴² W.S. Pettigrew to James C. Johnston, January 6, 1847. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Pettigrew said he shed a tear, told Collins of his affection for the young lady and "I then turned my back, forever, on the bright dreams of my youth." He remained unmarried for the rest of his long life.⁴³ He turned his back on the Collins family as well and in the future felt little but ill will toward them. His censorious remarks about the Collinses' Christmas dinners, just quoted, are characteristic of his feelings. But there was one occasion when he and Collins had a real feud, to the secret delight of his father, whose feeling for Collins was no less bitter. Ebenezer wrote young Johnston Pettigrew, his youngest son, about it:

I regret to tell you that Mr. Collins has given offence to your brother William, and he [William] is very much excited, more so than I have ever seen him. It was on the day of the election. Your brother Charles and myself did our best on Sunday to quiet him, I hope with success. The least that can be said, for Collins is, that he is a very self-sufficient, and impudent man and William cannot put up with it. I could wish that all with whom I have an interest could have nothing to do where he is. I hope to keep clear of him while I live. I can say with truth that I have never seen his like.⁴⁴

Both Ebenezer and William frequently indulged in bitter tirades against "Lord Consequence," who undoubtedly was arrogant. By 1842, perhaps earlier, the little friendliness that had existed between Ebenezer and Collins had turned to bitterness. Ebenezer confided to his friend James C. Johnston of Hayes Plantation at Edenton that he did not regret this and would never wish better terms for himself and sons.

⁴³W.S. Pettigrew, memos dated April 22, 1845, and other dates. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁴⁴Ebenezer Pettigrew to J.J. Pettigrew, August 10, 1847. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Why my dear friend there is not nor can there be any real proclivity of feeling. So much Pride, so much selfishness, so much vanity, so much opinionatedness, in a word so much of everything that is unamicable, and I fear that is unchristian that I am tired of even the acquaintance. I am perfectly astonished at the man, and sometimes say to myself surely I am in a delusion, I must be mistaken, I am wrong. He certainly does seem to combine all the bad qualities of both families, and the Lord have mercy on his soul.⁴⁵

An example of this stupendous selfishness, as Pettigrew saw it, was Collins' effort to trade some inferior seed wheat for some of Pettigrew's. Wrote Pettigrew: "Do you see how little a certain man cares for any one but himself. I shall never go one inch out of my way to serve him, and he may be as mad as he pleases."⁴⁶

In part Pettigrew's loathing of his neighbor resulted from a feeling that Collins was slipshod in the management of his plantation. This Pettigrew could not stand because he was fanatical on the subject of one's duty to business and when he saw his neighbor running off to the neglect of his crop, he seemed personally scandalized. He constantly predicted ruin for him. In 1835 the wheat crops at the lake were much damaged by a late frost. Pettigrew wrote that "Mr. Collins is so much injured that he is ploughing up the best half of his...." As if to suggest that Collins' being so much away was the cause of it, he said, " [Mrs. Collins] stays on the Lake scarcely any and Mr. C. not much more. These things must needs be. But, woe unto him---"⁴⁷ The next winter the crops were as much damaged by wet weather. The lake filled to the brim and overflowed in every direction. Pettigrew was

⁴⁵ Ebenezer Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, July 31, 1842. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁴⁶ Ebenezer Pettigrew to W. S. Pettigrew, June 23, 1842. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁴⁷ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan, April 10, 1835. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

in Congress this winter but through his overseer, Doctrine Davenport, saw to it that his land was freed of the excess water. He wrote, "My share is pretty safe but Mr. Collins has and will suffer very much. Mr. C. was at the Lake a few days while I was, the only time since November. My dear son, that will not do for interest. It was not the way your father made his estate and if he, your father, had not the best overseer, it would not be the way he would keep it."⁴⁸

In spite of this sort of antagonism the Pettigrews and Collinses did have to do with each other. Ebenezer surprisingly was even to enter the highly speculative silk business in partnership with Collins, although this association only contributed to more bitterness. The silk business will be discussed in some detail later. Ebenezer's oldest son, Charles, from first to last enjoyed good relations with the Collinses. Charles was by temperament different from his father and his brother William, being less easily offended and more flexible. He was married to a delightful lady of breeding and good temper, the former Caroline North of South Carolina, niece of Louis L. Petigru of Charleston and distant cousin to the Lake Phelps Pettigrews. Mrs. Charles Pettigrew knew how to get along with the Collinses better than others of the family, although she was by no means blind to their faults. Likewise, Ebenezer's daughter, Mary, knew how to enjoy her neighbors and could often laugh at the eccentric animosities of her father and brother William as well as at the pretensions of the Collinses.

⁴⁸ Ebenezer Pettigrew to W. S. Pettigrew, March 31, 1836. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

At the same time that Ebenezer was learning to deplore his neighbors, his son Charles was developing very friendly relations with Mr. Collins. Early in 1837, for example, he wrote his father about having Christmas dinner at Somerset Place and about other friendly relations.

"Mr. Collins has treated me with every attention and wishes me to use no ceremony in visiting him. He soon got notice of the steam mill [that Charles was planning to erect at Columbia] and has been very polite on that subject to me. He has told me all about the cost of his mill and assisted me to calculate the cost of the one I am engaged in."⁴⁹

William Pettigrew could not abide the friendly neighborliness between his brother's family and the Collinses. He often snorted about it, but he had little influence with his brother and his vivacious sister-in-law, who laughed goodnaturedly at him. When the younger brother, Johnston Pettigrew, showed signs of taking up with the Collinses, it had a bitter taste to William. To his sister he told about Johnston's plan to go to New England for a summer trip in 1848, only to be waylaid by the Collinses and others who took him with them to the Virginia Springs instead.

Now, all this change of his first plan may be very right; but I will merely remark...that the C--family, both male and female, are the most remarkable people I have ever met with. There is something about them which fascinates almost every one that approaches them, and, it does appear, from all that I have seen, for now nearly eleven years, that nothing but the most distant intercourse can protect one from falling into their train; which the experience of this part of the State, for the last twenty nine years (Dating from the death of the first old gentleman of the name, whose influence was all exerted for good), but too mournfully attests.⁵⁰

Collins was fond of reading aloud and considered himself a good reader. The Pettigrew children would go over occasionally to hear him

⁴⁹C. L. Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, January 19, 1837. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁵⁰W. S. Pettigrew to Mary Pettigrew, September 14, 1848. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

read, as they did at Christmas, 1837.⁵¹ Later, the Collinses organized a reading club which lasted several years and was chiefly supported by the Collins family and whatever guests they had and by the Charles L. Pettigrew family, who were sometimes reluctant but always faithful. The club met on Monday evenings during the winter season. It consisted of reading aloud, discussion, and interludes of music and singing. In 1857 the club had been going for a couple of years and by then the Pettigrews were tired of it. Mrs. Collins wanted Caroline Pettigrew to tell her mother, Mrs. North, that she was much missed at the club this winter, that her contributions had been so much appreciated in former seasons. Caroline Pettigrew dutifully wrote her mother and added tiredly, "the 'club' began its 'session' as they term it, last Monday, we all went and all read - but it does seem rather an exaction from the time one comes home [in the fall], until one leaves again [in the summer], as is now the case."⁵² The book club was still going strong in 1859 and lasted perhaps another winter.

We begin to have a fairly clear picture of relations between the two chief families in the lake community and, what is more important, to appreciate something of the tone of life and society in the neighborhood. In view of the distaste of Ebenezer Pettigrew for Collins, it could hardly be expected that the two men would get much involved with each other in important matters, and particularly

⁵¹Mary Pettigrew to Mrs. J. H. Bryan, December 26, 1837. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁵²Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to her mother, Mrs. North, January 8, 1857. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

in business. But strangely, Pettigrew and Collins were to embark upon a business partnership and that in a highly uncertain and speculative field. In 1836 Collins approached Pettigrew about joining him in the cultivation of mulberry trees for the silk growing craze that was then sweeping the country. This business was one of those speculative bubbles that finally collapsed ignominiously with ruin to many investors. Collins and Pettigrew were luckier than most and apparently came out of it without any real financial loss though they lost large paper profits. But the experience had exacerbated Pettigrew's nerves.

Pettigrew first agreed to the partnership, but then immediately regretted doing so and sought a way to get out of it without dishonor. In a letter to his friend, creditor, and confidante, James C. Johnston of Hayes plantation, he expressed his worst misgivings: "...The die is cast," he said. "I have agreed to become a partner, and it is expected to buy a sandy piece of ground and commence forthwith. Will you be so good as to give me your ideas not on the subject of the silk culture but of the partnership. I fear I have done wrong. This is confidential."⁵³ Apparently, Johnston was very doubtful of the wisdom of getting tied up with Collins on a business venture. Pettigrew was remorseful and repentant:

With regard to your remarks on the subject of the silk culture, I agree in every word, and have to regret the course which I have taken, and how to get out of it with honour I know not. It plagued me exceedingly before I received your letter and it really has tormented me since. I hope you will by no means believe that I am displeased at anything in that letter but on the contrary I am much obliged, and have only to regret that I had not seen you before I moved in the business, for as I before remarked, I was after my sickness no

⁵³Ebenezer Pettigrew to James C. Johnston, December 10, 1836. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

more than a wilted colwart leaf. I wished and asked the advice of my son Charles on the subject, but his only reply was, he thought it might be a profitable business. I have no idea of giving my personal attention to it, and if I continue in the partnership, I shall propose to get a third person to take the entire superintendence. Your character of the man [Collins] is as true as it is possible to draw of anything, and I think I know as intimately the heart of that man as of any person on earth. A more selfish man never lived, and why with all that knowledge I have become thus entangled, I do not know. Both my sons have the same opinion....You may rest assured that I shall be on my guard, but people get the advantage of me with my eyes open and seeing all their acts.⁵⁴

Pettigrew cast the blame on his fate; he was predestined to get into such uncomfortable situations.

Pettigrew wrote Collins to say he could put in only \$1,000 at the beginning. If Collins thought that was enough to start, he could go ahead. Pettigrew, it is plain, was trying to discourage his partner.⁵⁵ Collins wrote that he was glad Pettigrew had consented to join him and that he would go ahead with arrangements to buy the land they needed for growing the mulberry slips.⁵⁶ A formal partnership agreement was drawn up, a sandy tract of land was purchased, and the partners were in business. The mulberry farm was known as "Sahara" and was located on what is now known as "Pea Ridge," a sandy ridge skirting the south shore of the Albemarle Sound, not far from the present site of the Albemarle Sound bridge. Forty thousand of the morus multicaulis (mulberry) seedlings were started and two years later sales commenced. Petti-

⁵⁴ Ebenezer Pettigrew to James C. Johnston, January 27, 1837. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁵⁵ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Josiah Collins, December 7, 1836. Pettigrew Papers. In State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

⁵⁶ Josiah Collins to Ebenezer Pettigrew, December 24, 1836. Ibid. Pettigrew Papers, Archives and History.

grew's brother-in-law, Judge John H. Bryan of Raleigh, heard glowing reports of the business and conveyed this interesting information to his wife. The Bryans, hard pressed to maintain their huge family on the income of a judge, were half jealous of Pettigrew's easy money. Said Judge Bryan, "I have heard from two or three sources that Messrs. Collins and Pettigrew have sold \$60,000 worth of the multicaulis. Some people seem to be very lucky in this world, but there is a principle of compensation which mercifully pervades the order of providence. I'm sure I would not give my dear wife for all the money that ever has been made from silk or purple."⁵⁷

Probably Bryan had the sales figure a bit too high and certainly he mistook the solidity of the sales transactions. Two months previously Pettigrew had written Bryan that \$6,000 worth had been sold and that the seedlings were still in good demand so that his partner, Collins, "is very sanguine of realizing all that we had expected." The sale price was two cents per bud.⁵⁸ The big sale of trees, the one that Bryan heard of, was made in the spring of 1839 to the Maryland Silk Company of Baltimore, of which a Methodist preacher, Luther J. Cox, was president. This concern took 127 large boxes containing 2,000,000 buds. Evidently some cash payment was made, but Collins and Pettigrew took notes, including interest, totaling \$30,415.24. Later the Reverend Cox found it impossible to pay off these notes. By June 1839, 2,464,861 trees had been sold, some of them in small

⁵⁷J. H. Bryan to Mrs. Bryan, March 11, 1839. Bryan Collection.

⁵⁸Ebenezer Pettigrew to J. H. Bryan, January 18, 1839. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

lots to local persons who were eager to participate in the silk speculation.⁵⁹

The multicaulis engaged Collins' close and energetic attention. Details of packing and transport had to be attended to and Collins made sure these things were properly managed. He went to Baltimore personally to conduct the transaction with Cox's company. Apparently Collins and Pettigrew did not lose much money on their investment, but they did not reap all the fat profits they had anticipated. The Maryland Silk Company got into difficulties and could not pay off the notes. Pettigrew complained of "the villiny [sic] of the Methodist preacher to whome [sic] we sold," giving that as the reason that they had not realized a return on their investment by 1840. Still he thought the investment safe.⁶⁰ Two years later, in 1842, after what general success we do not know, Collins and Pettigrew were trying to get their money out of the land and facilities they had used in the mulberry business. The records do not make clear whether or not they succeeded.

In the 1940's an old ex-slave of Somerset Place, interviewed by a newspaperman, recalled that tragedy often afflicted the Collinses. He said Ole Miss' Collins had to bear many troubles. This statement refers to the accidental death of three of the six Collins sons while they were still very young. Two of the boys were

⁵⁹Pettigrew to J. H. Bryan, June 24, 1840. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁶⁰Josiah Collins to Ebenezer Pettigrew, February 19, 1842. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

drowned in the canal in 1843 and the other was killed in a riding accident on the carriage drive in the late 1850's. In addition there were near-drownings involving other members of the family, a long night vigil for another son who was temporarily lost on the lake during a storm, and no doubt other episodes not recorded.

William S. Pettigrew, who relented from his unfriendliness in times of sorrow at Somerset Place, left a pathetic and vivid account of the drowning of Edward and Hugh Collins in 1843. These children, age eight and ten, with two Negro boys their age, were drowned in the canal at the lower end of the garden, on a February afternoon. Let Pettigrew's account tell this sad story:

Edward and Hugh Collins were drowned in their Father's canal on Thursday 4½ P. M. Feb. 2^d, 1843. They were seen by my father's servant Jim as he carried the mail over, together with two Negro boys nearly of the same age in a boat in the canal...midway between the dwelling house and the mill. As Jim crossed the bridge on his return, he perceived the heads of the boys above the water. He immediately gave the alarm. Mr. Collins and Joseph Newberry [the overseer] were in the field a mile or half a mile from the spot. William Newberry [under overseer] was at the mill; he immediately had the mill gates shut in order to prevent the bodies passing through them: there not being sufficient force to close the Lake gates, they remained open until force came from the field. As soon as Jim had given the alarm, Mr. Fitzgerald [the minister at Somerset Place] and he ran to the spot. Mr. F. insisted on Jim leaping in to extricate them, but the latter refused on the ground that he would be numbed, whereupon Mr. F. leaped in himself, without any alteration in his clothing; in a short while he became numbed and had it not been for Jim's timely assistance would have sunk to rise no more, the water being ten feet deep.

In about an hour after they were first discovered, Mr. Collins and Joseph Newberry arrived together with a number of Negroes. The upper gates were closed and the lower ones opened; the water soon fell, leaving it waist deep. Joseph Newberry and Dick Blount (a Negro man) took out the children. They had been drowned a half hour or hour when they were taken from the canal.

Edward and Hugh were carried to their Father's house, and placed in separate rooms, that both might derive the utmost benefit from the fire. They were rubbed incessantly, _____ [?] and other applications were used...but all in vain....My brother Charles, with others, was rubbing Hugh. After an hour or two had elapsed, and their efforts were evidently unavailing, Mrs. Collins being in the same room, asked the Dr. if there was an hope - 'None madam' was the reply. Then followed a sublime scene: She kissed her child with a mother's fondness. With firmness bordering on heroism, the silent tear trickling down her cheek, she addressed him as follows - 'Farewell my dear son; you are promising buds (hesitating a moment) destined to bloom in heaven, which has been my aim - my chief aim.' Then taking her remaining children that were in the room to the lifeless body - said - 'Come, look at your dear brother - there are but five of us now.' She then took leave of the gentlemen in the room, and thanked them for their kindness.

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The bodies were shrouded late in the afternoon, after tea the coffin was carried into the room, and the bodies placed in it. About 9 the family made their appearance to take farewell of the objects of their affection before the lid was closed.

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On Saturday morning, soon after daylight, the coffin, containing the two brothers, was placed in my Father's barouche, bound securely with cords. Two of the gentlest horses on Mr. Collins' plantation were to draw them, a servant was to ride one of the horses, William Newberry and myself to ride in front on horse back, two Negro outriders in the rear, and Mr. Riggs [Mrs. Collins' brother] in a sulky behind the entire company. In this manner we proceeded...until we reached the Ferry (Macky's). Mr. and Mrs. Collins, together with the gentlemen of the household, arrived at 3 o'clock, an hour later. Immediately upon their arrival the steamboat left for Edenton with its charge. Mr. Collins thanked me most affectionately for the little service I had rendered.⁶¹

Ebenezer Pettigrew wrote his son Johnston about the tragedy and related that he had had "the painful task to perform of laying out or shrouding [sic] the poor little boys."⁶²

⁶¹ Sketch by W. S. Pettigrew in Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁶² Ebenezer Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, February 13, 1843. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Ten years later another son, George came close to drowning in the canal. He fell from the bridge at the dwelling house after night-fall and was stuck in the mud, making it difficult to find him. His body was lifeless when he was brought up, but he was revived. It did seem, as William Pettigrew wrote, that "The canal has been an unfortunate place for Mr. C's family." It was unfortunate that the dwelling area was organized right around the canal as it was. As can be seen in visiting the place today, the main walk and drive to the house were on a high bank alongside the canal, the house being only about twenty feet from the canal and facing it. The lawn lay across the canal, which was bridged at the house to allow passage back and forth. The family, with small children growing up, faced daily the hazard of a deep and swift stream flowing past their front door.

At a later time George Collins gave the family another fright. He was compelled to spend the night on the lake, hanging to a boat that was overturned by a sudden squall while he and two slaves were returning from a bear hunt across the lake. Mrs. Collins was prostrate with worry all through the night and until searchers found him the next morning.⁶³ Death came to a third son, William Kent Collins, in the late 1850's. Riding his horse at a fast pace along the carriage drive leading to the house, he was thrown against an elm tree, the blow of which killed him instantly. Kent was named for Judge William Kent of New York, son of the famous Chancellor James Kent. Judge Kent and his family were close friends of the Collins family and the two families

⁶³ Mary Pettigrew to W. S. Pettigrew, June 6, 1861. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

frequently exchanged long visits. Kent Collins was a promising youth and evidently a favorite of his father, who was said to have been terribly aggrieved by his death. Mr. Collins, it is said, had a heavy chain fastened around the offending elm, which slowly cut into the tree and finally strangled it to death.

During his later years Collins was plagued with severe headaches. The Pettigrews thought it was this that chiefly caused his worst moods, which were becoming more frequent, and the Pettigrews provide a story to illustrate the matter. In 1859 Charles L. Pettigrew went to New York for treatment of a cancer of the face. His wife remarked to the Collinses at the Reading Club that she expected her husband would return home before his time was up, so devoted was he. Mrs. Collins, glancing at her husband, said facetiously "that was different from some people." Collins "instantly replied, 'Mr. Pettigrew has a young and interesting wife'." Mrs. Pettigrew was "so shocked for a moment for Mrs. C. that I could scarcely answer, but she [Mrs. Collins] did not seem to mind it, or did not show it if she did. Mr. C.'s headaches make him a little irritable I fancy."⁶⁴

Collins was a dominant type of personality, one might even say domineering. The alternative for people who would not stand to be overpowered was to leave him alone, as some of the Pettigrews did, or to take him with humor, as did some of the other Pettigrews. Mrs. Collins retreated to a wifely role of reticence.

⁶⁴Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to C. L. Pettigrew, April 5, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Finally her personality seemed to congeal in the classic mold of the pious, unobtrusive mate of a self-willed and opinionated old man. In his youth Collins had been the type of young blade who would, and did, horse whip a man, considered no doubt to be his inferior, in a public place.⁶⁵ During his mature years at Somerset Place he maintained an aggressive type of hospitality that aimed to overpower as well as to please those who partook of it. The Collins hospitality drew people, but since it had some rather ludicrous features, some who enjoyed it went home and ridiculed it.

Mrs. Charles L. Pettigrew, though not unfriendly in her general feeling for her neighbors, often spoke derisively of their entertainments. In 1856, for example, she said that her neighbors were "remarkable for the energy they displayed in catering for the amusement of their numerous guests, tea drinkings were mere trifles, charades, music and suppers each contributed to draw out the powers, and give entertainment to, the various individuals!!!!!" As for herself, she said that, "spurning to follow the usual track to Fame, I boldly struck out another, and gave on Thursday a déjeuner or matinee, whichever you like best."⁶⁶ At another time, comparing the Pettigrew manner to that of the Collinses, she said, "we have come to the self satisfactory conclusion that the style of our dinner and tea had a beneficial effect upon the rather boisterous hospitality of our neighbors."

In 1859 the Charles L. Pettigrews were to dine with the Collinses after Christmas. Mrs. Pettigrew wrote her confidante brother-in-law,

⁶⁵Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, February 2, 1856. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁶⁶Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, January 26, 1854. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

James Johnston Pettigrew, of the coming event. Said she,

"We are to dine with Mrs. Collins today at ½ past five o'clock, don't you think our hours approach civilization? There is a prospect, that in due course of time 'three o'clock' dinner with us will be merely a tradition, just as the ancient hour of twelve - is now."⁶⁷

The Collinses engaged themselves with many remarkable cultural enterprises, but none more so than their plan in 1845, according to Mary Pettigrew, to adopt French as the language of the household. "Mr. Collins has a French teacher and the whole family study and intend to adopt it as the language of the house." This French tutor, Mr. Ernest, also caused the family to order a piano for the Colony House, where the sons and the tutor had rooms, and the sons were to "accomplish that branch also."⁶⁸

In 1859 the eldest Collins son, Josiah IV, was married to Miss Sallie Jones of Hillsboro, daughter of Cadwalader Jones. This marriage brought forth the most elaborate preparations at Somerset Place and put the family very much in the public eye. Annie Pettigrew, visiting relatives in Raleigh at the time Mr. and Mrs. Collins passed through to Hillsboro for the wedding, related her impression to her crony brother, William. Said she, "The Collins family - as they were called here - seemed to fly about a great deal, while here. I have been asked several times, did you see the Collins family? I don't think ever before was known such a ridiculous amount of luggage for two persons."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, February 3, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁶⁸ Mary Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, May 15, 1845. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁶⁹ Annie Pettigrew to W. S. Pettigrew, December 17, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

Mrs. Charles L. Pettigrew observed the preparations made at Somerset Place with keen and witty interest. The house was redecorated inside, fine lace curtains were hung, lawns and walks were trimmed and some handsome new walks laid out in the "small plain before the house yclept the lawn." A handsome cake was brought from New York by express - "a sort of primogeniture looking cake, worthy the eldest Son, and the occasion."⁷⁰

The Collinses did not stay at Somerset Place during the summer, except infrequently, as in the summer of 1860 when Mrs. Collins was bedridden as the result of a stroke. Usually they spent the summer in a tour of the various springs and other resorts - Red Calibeate, White Sulphur and others of the Virginia resorts, as well as Saratoga in the North. In the fall they would come back home, and soon the many guests would begin to arrive. The main concentration of their hospitality came with the Christmas season, but the house was usually filled with visitors till May, when the Collinses themselves began to think of leaving home again.

During a typical winter, there were fourteen long-staying guests at Somerset Place. At another time in May, Mrs. Charles Pettigrew reported that "Our neighbors have had several friends staying with them lately - nine of the party left on Wednesday - some few remain."⁷¹ In April of the next year, seven guests arrived in one day to stay about two weeks, and a straggling member of the same party was expected

⁷⁰ Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Minnie North, December 19, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁷¹ Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, May 29, 1858. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

to arrive the next Saturday.⁷² During the winter the Book Club was always revived and there was talk and music and other types of entertainment, much of it of a political sort as the Civil War drew nigh. Entertainment was varied, but in 1857, on the occasion of the marriage of some Collins friends, there were quadrilles every night.⁷³

In the 1850's the Collinses became much excited about the abolitionist question and about the other issues that divided the country. The Pettigrews thought they overdid their sentiments on these subjects. Charles L. Pettigrew confided to his wife, while he was a guest at Somerset Place in the summer of 1860, that he was "bored to death by Mr. Collins's long winded harangues."⁷⁴ Mrs. Pettigrew noted that "Our excellent neighbors appear to me as rabid on one side of the subject, as the Abolitionists are on the other." She said she had to keep quiet while they talked and by thus playing dumb remain in harmony with them.⁷⁵

A Northern visitor, a Mr. Pumpelly, one of the many commentators who toured the South in those days to get first hand impressions of slavery, was ostentatiously received by the Collinses and treated with overwhelming hospitality. But they would not

⁷²Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. North, April 3, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁷³Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. North, May 24, 1857. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁷⁴C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, August 30, 1860. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁷⁵Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to J. J. Pettigrew, December 25, 1856. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

give him a chance to voice one opinion, so voluble were they in expressing their own. Mr. Pumpelly also went to see the Pettigrews and confided to Mrs. Pettigrew that the Collinses were very nice people but perhaps "too narrow on some subjects." Mrs. Pettigrew agreed with him that their "way of hitting at the North all the time, and allowing nothing said contra, is...neither good manners, nor good sense, the injustice is too manifest."⁷⁶ Mrs. Pettigrew could not help but feel the irony of the Collins position in view of the fact that they had just returned from a shopping trip to New York where they had spent lavishly of their money.

When the war came, Collins joined with William Pettigrew in financing certain Washington County military companies, and Mrs. Collins engaged herself diligently in making drawers for Confederate soldiers. Josiah Jr. and Arthur, sons of the family, early in 1862, went into service with an Edenton company. The third son, George, joined the forces at another time and became an able young officer on General J. J. Pettigrew's staff.

By the middle of 1862 Roanoke Island had fallen and the way was open for an invasion of the Albermarle Sound country. With the country exposed and the Federals proceeding up the Sound, the Collinses and Pettigrews fled the Lake. By the middle of August the Federals

⁷⁶Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. North, April 26, 1859. Pettigrew Papers, U. N. C.

had taken "all the horses of Josiah Collins and Pettigrew."⁷⁷

Earlier in the year, Collins had taken a large number of his Negroes to Hillsboro to get them out of the way of the approaching Federals. He had quite a problem in this connection, as by the census of 1860 he had 328 slaves and to find hire for such a number away from home was a big undertaking. He did not completely succeed in doing so and in March he found it necessary to take some of them back to the lake.

Charles L. Pettigrew kept his negroes on his plantation and did not try to remove them. William Pettigrew's negroes "stampeded" at the news of the Federal advance into the Albemarle, and this so enraged him that he took them by surprise and moved them away. Mrs. Charles L. Pettigrew wrote that he surrounded the slave houses with troops and seized every man, woman, and child and took them to Chatham County.⁷⁸

The Civil War years marked a great change in the fortunes of Somerset Place. Federal foraging troops and local "Buffaloes"

⁷⁷William Badham to his wife, August 14, 1862. William Badham Papers, Duke University Manuscripts Department. A further note on the raiding of the lake plantations is from a local source: H. G. Spruill, of Plymouth, reported in a memorandum that "Since [August 1, 1862] vessels have been sent to the Lake, and brought away from the Farm of J. Collins, Esqr., a lot of corn and wheat, which is here [Plymouth], being distributed to the poor, by Samuel Newberry, under the appointment of Gov. Stanly. They have also sent down and taken, seven horses from Mr. Collins and five from Charles L. Pettigrew, Esqr. These horses are now used here, under the charge of John Giles, as cavalry for pickets use." (Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.)

⁷⁸Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. North, March 22, 1862. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

plundered the plantation, farming operations seem to have ceased entirely, and the war years witnessed the beginning of a course of decay that became pronounced during the postwar history of the plantation. The Pettigrews returned to their place to find local white families ensconced in their dwelling house and pretending claims to the land, the Negroes indolent and out of control, and the fields beginning to grow up in bushes.

There is no reason to believe the situation was different at the neighboring Collins plantation. During the war Mr. Collins had died while a refugee at Hillsboro, leaving sons who were indifferently trained for plantation management. Two of the sons returned to the lake with their widowed mother in 1865, but they were not successful in reviving the place. The Negroes would not agree to labor contracts suitable to their former owners, so they were all driven off the place. This left the family without any kind of help. The Collins women were reduced to doing their own housework and the men to cutting firewood and doing other menial chores. Finally three white girls from the community were hired to do housework and cooking. The sons made temporary and not wholly satisfactory arrangements to farm part of the plantation land with local white labor. But within a few years the Collinses were forced to admit defeat and sell the plantation.

The Pettigrews, older, more resourceful, and more experienced than the Collins young men, noticed the purposeless and wasted efforts of their neighbors with sad concern. They saw their young neighbors as preoccupied with their dogs and lacking in practical initiative and

judgment. For Mrs. Collins they felt sympathy and affection but sensed the pathos of her effort to carry on in the old manner and to dispense the old-time hospitality.⁷⁹

The last Collins dinner party described in the Pettigrew sources powerfully illustrates this last point and also particularizes one of the great dislocations of the postwar period, which applied not only to the Collinses; but to the Pettigrews as well and to many of their class in the South. The dinner party took place in the spring of 1866. Mrs. Collins put it on in honor of one Colonel Cowand, who is not otherwise identified. Nine guests, including Charles and William Pettigrew, were present. Charles Pettigrew reported that Mrs. Collins "had a ham, lamb and turkey and what [we] did not expect Lobster." This was good Mrs. Collins' way of doing things in the face of her ruin and less than a year before she would lose the plantation through a creditors' sale. As a further note on the changing times at Somerset Place, Pettigrew observed that the young white hired girl, Caroline Todd, first "prepared the dinner and then sat down to the table among the guests," which he thought to be a novel procedure. He noted however that "The party waited in the parlor before going in to the table as they used to do." He said that Mrs. Collins and her daughter-in-law "were a week preparing and had a good deal of tolerable cake."

But the party "was a very quiet one" because young Josiah,

⁷⁹See various letters of the period in the Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

unlike his father, "is very quiet and only now and then makes any attempt at fun. He is not able to take his father's place. What a change!"⁸⁰

Appreciating changes that went beyond the question of whether Mrs. Collins' dinner was a success, changes that foretold a profound social turnover in the community, Pettigrew raps the pretensions of certain new families in the lake neighborhood. "I am sorry to see," he said, "that some of our neighbors are disposed to think that the Collins and Pettigrews are broken and their places will be taken by someone else." He mentioned Ammon Spruill particularly, a local farmer of only moderate circumstances before the war. Spruill had just shipped to Norfolk 11,000 bushels of corn (the most any person in the community had shipped since the war started) and "thinks himself the most considerable person and his family...the most rising family."⁸¹ In view of Pettigrew's presentiments, it is dramatic irony that this same Ammon Spruill should within a few years hold a mortgage on the last scrap of land the Pettigrews held in the lake area, after losing their plantations one by one, and that he should foreclose on them because they spurned the efforts of Spruill's son to pay court to one of the Pettigrew daughters.⁸²

By the end of 1866 the Collinses were insolvent and it became necessary to put the entire estate on the auction block to satisfy

⁸⁰C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, May 18, 1866. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁸¹C. L. Pettigrew to Mrs. Pettigrew, May 18, 1866. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁸²That Ammon Spruill gained title to Belgrade plantation is a matter of public record. The circumstances of the foreclosure were related to the writer by Mrs. Rennie Alexander, of Creswell, niece of Ammon Spruill, who remembers the episode.

debts against it. The nature of these debts is not altogether clear, except that they reportedly involved the late Josiah Collins' guardianship of William B. Sheppard, a minor and a nephew. An important creditor was Dr. Thomas Warren, the late Josiah's brother-in-law. Mrs. Charles L. Pettigrew in a letter to her sister gives a vivid account of the predicament Mrs. Collins was in as she faced being sold out and left homeless:

You will be grieved to hear that our friends the Collins' are to have a sale of all their property, personal, as well as belonging to the Estate. It is advertized that for January 12th - everything sold without reserve, I heard that even Mr. Collins's watch and chain wld be sold, but dont mention this, it is to me so painful and there may be a change. I went two or three days ago to ask Mrs. Collins to make our home her home when she makes a change, she was gratified, but said Arthur hoped to rent that house for a year, wh she wld be very glad of, and cld not think any of the probable purchasers wld object, that he was anxious to purchase "Western," if possible and work out the debt he would thereby incur, for remember, he hasn't one cent - the Estate is insolvent, everything was left to Mrs. Collins by her husband's will, had she dissented, wh wld have provided for her handsomely - at least given her a home and support - as it is, she will be homeless, after having lived here and exercised the largest hospitality for nearly 40 years. Joe [Josiah] is to live in Hillsboro. Mrs. Jones urges that her daughter stay with her, not in view of these circumstances any more than before them - he wants his Mother to live with them, George wishes her to go to Miss. to him - but she naturally desires to remain with Arthur, who is very averse to breaking from here altogether, and hopes to buy in Western. He offered to the creditors (of whom the chief is Dr. Tom Warren) to assume the debt and give ten years of his unmarried life [she had written and struck out offered "not to marry for ten years"] to working it out, if they wld release him from the interest - they will not hear to any compromise! demand full interest during the War - so everything must be brought to the hammer. It is really distressing. They one and all bear it with

cheerfulness, and without the first complaint."⁸³

The sale came off on schedule and the two sons, Josiah and Arthur, bid in both Somerset Place and Western Farm for \$10,000 apiece-" not an approach to their value," said Mrs. Charles L. Pettigrew. But the creditors were not satisfied with the sale and contested it. The family was thrown into uncertainty at this turn of events and did not know whether the sale would be confirmed until the next superior court. If it was not confirmed, said Mrs. Pettigrew,

They will be worse off than before, for they had a sale of stock and household articles on Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Arthur bought in many things, indeed almost everything. Should the sale not be confirmed these will be resold I am told. Dr. Warren [their uncle] is the principal creditor and being very angry with the young men I fear they will have much trouble still....I greatly fear we may yet lose our neighbours - it will be decided in two weeks more.⁸⁴

The sale was not confirmed and the family labored for a while under another suspense.⁸⁵

In 1870 Mrs. Collins assigned Somerset Place to William B. Shepard to satisfy an obligation of \$10,000 against her late husband's estate. This arose from the guardianship that Collins had exercised over Shepard during the latter's minority. The lands conveyed in this transaction amounted to 4,428 acres, which was the area of Somerset Place proper.⁸⁶

⁸³Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Minnie North, December 8, 1866. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C. "Western" referred to was and is Western Farm, a subsidiary plantation to Somerset Place.

⁸⁴Mrs. C. L. Pettigrew to Minnie North, February 2, 1867. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁸⁵Mary Pettigrew to W. S. Pettigrew, February 24, 1867. Pettigrew Papers, U.N.C.

⁸⁶Tyrrell Deeds, Bk. 25, pp. 117-118.

Arthur Collins succeeded in keeping title to Western Farm and made his home there for many years. Finally, in the 1890's, it too slipped away, ending permanently Collins land ownership in the Lake Phelps area.

After 1870, Somerset Place, like many other large plantations in the period following the Civil War, began an erratic career and a period of decline, two characteristics of which were rapidly changing ownership and absentee landlordism. Mrs. Collins lived on the plantation till her death in 1872. In 1873 William B. Shepard mortgaged it to Herbert Paige of Edenton, brother-in-law of the late Josiah Collins. Paige soon gained title and for a number of years operated it under a manager. In the 1890's it was sold to a Scot named Leighton, but Leighton soon sold out to one Grey, from Ohio, who moved to the place about 1900. Grey held the plantation precariously for a number of years, making little out of it, and then it slipped into the control of a Rocky Mount bank in the 1920's. In 1937 the Federal Farm Security Administration acquired the land from the Rocky Mount group and incorporated it into the Scuppernong Farms resettlement project. In 1945 it was parceled and auctioned off to a number of different buyers, who by now have rehabilitated the lands and converted them into a prosperous and attractive farm community.

REPORT ON THE RESEARCH AND RESTORATION
PROGRAM AT PETTIGREW STATE PARK

The program of research on Somerset Place resulted in documentary, testimonial, and archeological data which established the original arrangement of the dwelling area at Somerset Place. Not all matters necessary to a complete historical restoration of the area were clarified, but most of the major problems have been solved, enabling the restoration to proceed.

Before the research program began certain features of the dwelling area, as originally organized, were clear enough. The mansion house and six smaller structures were standing in a small concentration at the junction of the Collins Canal with the lake shore. The old carriage drive followed its original line on the west bank of the canal to a point near the house, and the canal itself was of course in its original line. The canal, it was certain, was the main line of orientation in the original plan of the lot, since the mansion house and all but one of the surviving outbuildings were oriented to it.

Preliminary examination revealed a few old plantings in the garden area (notably an old magnolia, a line of offshoot crape myrtles, a line of flowering quince, and two old type rose bushes) which would later contribute to an understanding of the garden layout. On the lawn across the canal were a circular planting of oaks and border plantings of cypress and oaks which outlined the original lawn beyond question.

Beyond these features, preliminary examination of the area offered little evidence of the original plan, which by all local

testimony and tradition had been quite elaborate even into the twentieth century. It was clear enough that the original arrangement of roads and drives had been superseded in large part by the recent construction of generously curving drives. It was later found that these new roads, built in the late 1930's to serve the Farm Security Administration project, not only replaced the original routes of traffic but greatly obscured the original outline as to many other features.

The researcher had access to a drawing of the area made several years previously by the State Parks Division, which incorporated the evidence of a careful, though not wholly discriminating, topographical examination and testimonial data supplied by Renzy Sawyer of Creswell, an interested and keen observer of the place from his youth. This map proved to be correct in a general way, but of course erred in many particulars because of the nature of the data used in making it up. The researcher could not rely on this map any further than to use it as a tentative guide. He correlated it with additional testimony taken from other residents of the locality and made up rough sketches of several alternate plans suggested by different testimonial evidence.

An exhaustive search in the accessible records collections made in the winter of 1951-52 failed to yield any further clear evidence as to the Somerset Place plan, although much fragmentary data was accumulated which was useful later in interpreting archaeological evidence. Source materials bearing directly upon the history of the place were few and none of those discovered related

specifically to the dwelling area plan. It was hoped that useful old maps might be found, but none was found until long after the main part of the research program had been completed.

Using as a guide the map referred to above and the sketches he himself made, the researcher began a program of archeological exploration in April of 1952. The archeology continued intermittently until the spring of 1954. Mr. J. C. Harrington, Regional Archeologist, Region One, of the National Park Service, kindly assisted in the beginning of this work and helped the researcher master the necessary archeological techniques.

An exploratory trench dug from the old kitchen building across the yard to the lake shore, a distance of 100 feet, revealed the original brickwalk leading from the mansion house to the back yard area, under some ten inches of accumulated soil. This deep accumulation of soil on top of the original grade level was an important fact, as it determined at the outset at what depth the old features of the grounds layout would be found. The brick walk was traced back to the mansion house. Its connections with various other brick walks in the area were uncovered and these walks in turn were uncovered and followed out. Then the main walk was uncovered in the opposite direction from the point of discovery to a point where it made a turn (at the backyard gate as it later proved) and commenced its long straight run to the overseer's house site, located as testimonial evidence indicated, at the north end of the lot.

The tracing of the walk confirmed early indications of a deep accumulation of soil on the yard west of the mansion house. This fact established, the researcher hired a bulldozer to push off this layer

of intrusive soil so as to bring the grade back to its original level. By close observation during this work, he prevented damage to original features that might otherwise have been destroyed by heavy machinery. The only feature of consequence uncovered by the bulldozer was a short brick walk leading south from the main walk at a point near the "Colony" house. The bulldozer work was not primarily a research operation, but was rather a phase of restoration, as it was agreed that the yard grade should be brought to the original level for several reasons, among them the fact the the mansion house needed the lower grade to give it proper scale.

Upon completion of this work in the main yard, the scene of archeological work shifted to the site of the overseer's house. Exposing the main brick walk mentioned above to the point where it turned into the old "street" provided, as it turned out, an exact indication of the overseer's house site. This was gained by projecting the walk to the point on the north boundary of the lot where testimonial evidence claimed the site to be. Fortunately, testimonial evidence did not have to be relied on completely, for by this time the projected walk connected with topographical signs of an early building site. Excavations proved these indications to be correct and the overseer's house foundation was found intact.

Near the overseer's house, and oriented to the projected brick walk, were brick foundation piers of an original building which had stood there till 1950. This had been called by some the "jail" and by others the "meat house." Examination of frag-

mentary sill plates showed that this building was of exactly the same kind of close-studded construction as the existing smoke house near the Collins kitchen, and led to the conclusion that the building was probably a ration storage house. Its location within a dozen feet of the overseer's house rather precluded its being a jail for slaves and argued for its being a storehouse. It was general practice on large plantations for an overseer to have custody of slave rations and to dole them out. As custodian he was also responsible for the safety of provisions in his charge.

The main axis of the brick walk and of the flanking row of buildings having been established, trenches were run south in line with the ration storehouse. It was expected that these trenches would reveal the foundation of a second building, of which there was no visible evidence on the ground. At normal distance away the front wall foundation of what was later determined to be the slave chapel was exposed. This building site was completely excavated and the site mapped, as was done in the case of all features previously exposed by excavation.

Excavations were continued on the same line as far as the intrusion of a modern public road would permit. Three corners of a small square building, whose identity was never certainly established, were exposed at the edge of the road.

It was necessary to skip across the road which took up about 150 feet in the line of excavation. South of the road, on the same line, the foundation of what was determined to be the old slave hospital was uncovered and mapped. Further excavations on this line were halted by the intrusion of a very deep earth fill placed some

years ago to carry a new road into the park area. A bulldozer was subsequently brought in to move this earth and exploration was continued the next year.

Testimonial data had indicated two sites on the opposite side of the "street" - i. e., roughly east of the slave hospital. The building closest to the lake had been called the "woodhouse" by the person giving verbal testimony dating farthest back (Mrs. Annie Holmes of Creswell). By those who remembered its later use it was called the "stables." From contemporary sources it had been determined that the Collins stables were located at the barnyard, a quarter of a mile down the canal from the house, so that the designation of the building as a stable was dismissed as belonging to the post-Collins period. This decision was later verified by testimonial evidence that the Leightons, who owned Somerset Place in the 1890's, had been the first to have stables on the main yard. A photograph dating from about 1920 showed this building to have at that time the character of a stable.

Archeological exploration now revealed that there had indeed been two buildings: an original building of known width but of undetermined length, and a later building with late concrete foundation features superimposed upon the foundation of the old. The researcher reached the conclusion that the original building had been lengthened to serve as a stable in later years. He was also inclined to feel that the testimony about the original building being the woodhouse was correct, as the site seemed entirely plausible as the location for a woodshed. For a number

of reasons he also came to the conclusion that the photograph of about 1920 showed the true style and scale of the original building. Statements of Renzy Sawyer and archeological indications led to the assumption that the original building had been extended in length without changes in the main structural style. Sawyer, a carpenter who has always paid particular attention to old building construction features, stated that the building he knew after 1900 had all the characteristics of earlier construction both as to general appearance and details. The photograph of about 1920 bears out this observation. In drawing up plans for the woodhouse the researcher assumed an appropriate length dimension for the original building on the basis of the building's probable orientation to adjacent fences, drains, and walkways.

After exploring the woodhouse site, excavations were continued in line to the north, where the "storehouse" was reported to have been located. At the expected place the foundation of a building of appropriate size for a storehouse (or was it a warehouse?) was uncovered and found to be complete. The added foundation of a shed on the garden side led to indecision for a time whether to consider the shed a feature of the original building. Later, Renzy Sawyer cleared up this problem. He stated that as a young man he lived in the storehouse while employed on the place, and that he at that time enlarged the house by bringing up the old bath house located about a hundred feet away and adding it as a shed to the back of it. The dimensions of the bath house foundation later uncovered confirmed this statement sufficiently and the storehouse for restoration purposes had been drawn without a shed. Sawyer further described the building in detail and his description served as the basis for the scale drawings pro-

vided for this building.

Excavations were carried on in line with the storehouse, but immediately the butts of a row of fence posts in line with the front wall of the building were uncovered. The fence line was followed as far as the modern road intrusion would allow, which was far enough to show that there had been no more buildings on on the east side of the "street."

It being impossible to continue exploration of the "street" because of the road, the scene of archeological work was shifted back to the mansion house area. Brick walks, terraces, and other features were uncovered on all sides of the house and these mapped. Similar features around the outbuildings were also uncovered. In the quadrangle formed by the kitchen, ice house and smokehouse, a brick-paved yard and foundations of the bath house and of a shed, originally a part of the existing kitchen storehouse, were uncovered and mapped. In the yard area north of the mansion house excavations revealed gravel walks of a formal garden at a depth of a foot and a half. Heavy machinery was brought in to clear off the fill of sand and clay with which the area had been covered in recent years to serve as a modern roadbed, and excavations were continued. A formal garden layout, complete in all details of arrangement (though the walks themselves had been much damaged), was laid bare. This was one of the most fascinating of discoveries made at Somerset Place, the more so since it was not expected. Excavation of the formal garden was completed before winter weather and other activities on the site interrupted the archeological work.

It had been agreed early in the period of research that the researcher would perform on-the-ground supervision of such restoration work as might be decided upon from time to time, in addition to conducting the research. In the early spring of 1952 he determined by a series of tests the original color of paints for the exterior of the mansion house, so that the painting scheduled for the house in the spring as a maintenance measure could count as a historical restoration measure as well. By scraping through the successive coats of paint in a number of sheltered places, it was determined that the basic original color was a light tan, the trim color a blue-gray, and the porch floors a grayish tan. Paints were ordered to conform to the color specifications prepared from these findings and were applied in the spring of 1953, following careful preparation of the surfaces to be painted.

Colors for the other existing buildings were likewise determined. It was found that the Colony house had been painted in the same colors as the mansion house and the other buildings in the color of the mansion house and Colony trim, except the kitchen storehouse which showed a dull dark red. It was recommended that these buildings be painted according to the various color schemes determined to be original and the buildings were accordingly repainted in the summer of 1953.

There was no physical evidence of the kind of paint used on the non-existing buildings. Findings on this subject are based principally on logical deduction. The bath house stood next to the kitchen and other buildings painted blue-gray, and next to the kitchen storehouse painted dark red. The building in size and scale was the same

as the main part of the kitchen storehouse, which fact would seem to suggest that it had its origin in the same period with the storehouse. If this is true it may have had the same dark red paint as the latter building. In view of all the circumstances it would seem logical to paint it that color when the building is reconstructed.

The other buildings on the lot and the slave quarters out of the main lot were probably all whitewashed. There is a contemporary reference to the fact that the slave chapel was whitewashed within and without and testimonial evidence of various local residents indicates that the buildings on the "street" were all whitewashed. It was certainly customary to whitewash the minor plantation buildings and it was not uncommon to use whitewash on good size buildings. The overseer's house, now reconstructed, has been painted white for reasons of maintenance and its present use as a dwelling for the park superintendent. But it is not recommended that other buildings reconstructed in the future be painted. If the slave quarters are ever rebuilt they should clearly be whitewashed.

In 1952 the researcher was asked to prepare data and drawings embodying his findings on the overseer's house for the purpose of enabling the Division of State Parks to make working plans for the reconstruction of this building. A main report and later supplementary reports for this purpose were submitted in the fall of 1952. The overseer's house, more particularly described in these reports, was a story-and-half building of four rooms, with a gambrel roof, a large chimney on the east end, and

a shed porch on the front (south) side. Two doors opened from the porch to the interior. Final plans for the building were prepared with frequent consultations with the researcher and it was reconstructed in late 1954 as a park superintendent's residence.

Other restoration work carried on in late 1952 and early 1953 included repaving of all the brick walks in the main yard area; restoration of the surface drainage system in the main yards; general repairs to the smokehouse, including putting in new sills, a new foundation, and replacing part of the upright framing; placing a new foundation under the kitchen storehouse and framing the shed which was an original part of the building; removing modern changes in the mansion house, including removal of five bathrooms, a kitchen, plumbing and electrical services, and housings for service lines; and, following the restoration of the interior, the necessary replastering of several rooms affected by this work. Much of the material used in this restoration work was salvaged from the house standing at the Bonarva (Pettigrew) place. This house was built in 1861 to replace the original which burned the year before. The house had deteriorated to such an extent by 1953 as to be a fire hazard and in danger of falling. Wrecking of the house, with the salvage of all valuable materials and clearing of the site, was accomplished early in 1953. Subsequently, in the summer of 1953, brick from the two large chimneys were salvaged and used in the restoration of brick walks and for other purposes at Somerset Place.

As time afforded in the midst of this restoration activity, the researcher continued archeological investigation in the garden area. The fence lines were traced out and established definitely. As noted

before, this was accomplished through excavation, by which the butts of the original posts were found. Not only were the fence lines thus established, but in some cases, where there were not walkways of durable material to indicate them, gates were located by the same means. The garden drainage system in its full extent was also established and the ditches reopened. The main ditch in the upper part of the garden, a continuation of the yard drainage, was found to be a brick-walled channel and this brickwork was restored. Other work in the garden area during 1953 included the restoration of the gravel walks in the formal garden on concrete bases and rough grading of the flower beds, the removal of a number of large trees, and removal of some small buildings and assorted debris, and barbed wire fencing.

Efforts to relocate the public road that crossed the restoration area dragged through 1953 without tangible results. This circumstance prevented further archeological research on the "street" and in the lower part of the project area generally. Further excavation was possible at the west end of the back yard (near the lake Shore) following removal of the road fill early in the year. Investigation here revealed the foundation of a building oriented to the lakeshore and to the line of slave quarters further up the lake shore. This foundation was found to be the same dimensions as that of the hospital located a short distance behind it, and since the foundation showed evidence of having been underground for a long period, the researcher was led to think it belonged to the earliest period of the plantation's history and outside the scope of the restoration project which cov-

ers the period of the 1850's.

A map drawn in 1821 showing the layout of the lot at that time places a building at this location but not one at the location later occupied by the hospital. It is known from other sources that Josiah Collins III, after settling at Somerset Place in 1830 enlarged and redesigned the dwelling area. The arrangement previously had been oriented to the lake shore. Collins changed the line of reference to that of the canal, and when he was through, all the buildings on the lot except the Colony, which was too large to be turned conveniently, were moved to conform to the new plan. All this strengthens the thought that the site in question was vacated during the reorganization of the lot and that perhaps the building originally there was really the hospital, later moved to a new site.

In the same portion of the yard a remnant of a narrow brick walk was uncovered which was in a line leading to the row of slave quarters outside the main lot. This walk was restored from the main walk at the yard fence west of the Colony to the western limit of the restoration area.

In the winter of 1953-54 plans were completed for the restoration of the yard and garden fences and materials for this purpose were ordered. While no remains of the original fences, other than the fence posts themselves, were discovered during research, testimonial evidence and knowledge of what was customary determined that the fences should be the picket type on the various fronts and post-and-rails in the back. Accordingly, this scheme was effected in the restoration of fences surrounding the four acres of gardens and crossing the back yard on the line of the "street" extended to the lake shore. This

work was accomplished in the spring and summer of 1954 under the supervision of the researcher.

Other restoration work carried on in the spring and summer of 1954 included the installation of appropriate hardware on the window blinds of the mansion and Colony houses. Replacement hardware was made by Max Staps of Goldsboro, based upon samples of the original hardware furnished him. The modern hinges in use in the mansion house were also replaced with replicas of the original type made by Dewey Brothers of Goldsboro after samples supplied. The plastering and woodwork of the first two floors of the mansion were painted to cover the repairs made the year before and rough portions of the floors in some of the rooms were refinished to conform with the other floors. The shed to the kitchen storehouse was completed and fitted. Doorsteps and balustrades were built at four entrances to the mansion house and to the porch of the Colony. Filling of serious washouts in the carriage drive in front of the house and in the opposite canal bank, started the year before, was continued, and grading of the carriage drive was completed. A narrow brick walk was restored alongside the drive from the mansion to the foot of the garden.

In the spring of 1954 circumstances favored relocation of the public road that crossed the project area. The two sets of farm buildings belonging to T. F. and Leslie Davenport had been moved during the winter and the way of the new road cleared. The old road was blocked off and archeological research and extensive grading was carried out in the area involved. Excavations in the line of the old "street" revealed the foundation

of a furnace structure and at a proper distance from that the foundation of a square building of apparently quite heavy construction. The foundation was disproportionately heavy for its size, as appended drawings will show. The piers were found to rest on heavy rafts of cypress timbers. No certain use for the furnace and the two buildings flanking it has been established. It is possible that the furnace was the one, referred to in local tradition, on which rations were cooked for the slave field force. It is said that food was cooked in large copper kettles on an outdoor furnace and the kettles were then set in carts and carried to the fields where the slaves were fed. One of these copper kettles has been acquired for exhibit at the park and is currently on display in the old Collins kitchen. If the furnace was the one used for this purpose, it is probable that the two flanking buildings were used for cooks' quarters and for ration storage and food preparation.

Between these sites and the hospital site at the head of the "street" is a long vacant segment, where excavations failed to yield any sign of a former building. The space is so extensive as to require that some structure should have been there, and it was baffling that nothing at all was found. In all probability there was once a building here of which all traces have been obliterated. The soil in that area proved to have been more than usually disturbed. It showed signs of having been a deep muckhole, which was later filled to serve as a roadbed.

With the removal of the road, extensive rough grading was done in the lower garden area and throughout the length of the "street", old drainage ditches were reopened, brick walks were restored through-

out the area, and the building sites were all outlined with low posts placed at intervals of about eight feet.

In the southwest corner of the garden enclosure (immediately behind the Colony) foundations of two small buildings were uncovered during the later stage of research. The identity and use of these structures were not established, but indications were that they were privies. A brick walk connects one of them with the Colony and a similar walk connects the other with the mansion house. Since no sites that could be identified with privies were found elsewhere this possibility seems the more plausible. On the other hand no sites identified with garden houses for the storage of tools and other purposes connected with garden maintenance were found, suggesting they may have been used for these purposes. The researcher is inclined to recommend that they both be restored as modern toilets for current public use, although another possibility would be to restore one as an authentic toilet of nineteenth century type and the other as a garden tool house. If it is decided to restore one as an authentic toilet of the restoration period, it is suggested that the design of the toilet at the James Iredell house in Edenton be copied for this purpose.

In the spring and summer of 1954 the researcher made elevation drawings of all non-existing buildings that were sufficiently documented to make drawings possible and made preliminary drawings for the restoration of the gardens. The drawings for these buildings and the gardens are bound in a large folder submitted with this report. Extensive notes appear on the face of the drawings and the garden plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT
OF THE HISTORICAL AREA AT PETTIGREW STATE PARK

The Lawn:

1. At present, the park does not control all the land in the old Collins lawn east of the canal. Land should be acquired and the lawn fully developed. This is the most important present need in the historical project. The lawn was the "front yard" of the Somerset Place establishment. Until it is developed, the restored dwelling will not have a proper front prospect and the impression created by the whole development will lack proper balance.

2. In developing the lawn it will be necessary to relocate the present lakeshore road, moving it off the lawn to the line of the new road on the west side of Somerset Canal. When the road is removed, the lawn should be graded to eliminate all modern features on the ground, such as the road itself, foundations of buildings recently removed from the area, and the drainage furrows laid out some years ago when the land was used for farming purposes. The seepage ditch alongside the east canal bank (now almost completely filled) should be reopened and connected with the seepage ditch along the old lakeshore drive. The canal bank itself should be filled and repaired in several places where it has eroded or otherwise been damaged.

3. It is certain that the lawn was once surrounded by fences on the east and north sides, to allow grazing of the plot by sheep. Probably no fences were erected on the other two sides, as the deep seepage ditch bounding the area on the south and west would have served in place of fences. It is conjectured that the fences were of the

post-and-rail type, like those now rebuilt on the back borders of the garden area. When fences are rebuilt on the lawn, this type should be duplicated. The fence lines are thought to have followed the bordering ditches on the north and east sides, either just inside or outside the ditches.

4. In the northeast corner of the lawn is a small graveyard, now discernible as a small overgrown hummock with low depressions where the graves are. Until a few years ago one or two headstones still marked the spot. Several members of the Collins household, including a governess by the name of Sarah Howser, were buried there. It is recommended that this graveyard be cleared and the graves restored. The headstone to Sarah Howser, now deposited against the old Collins kitchen, should be carried back to the plot and re-erected.

The Canal:

1. The modern control gate at the mansion house should be replaced with a wooden gate of appropriate early design. The position of the gate should be moved southward (toward the lake) some fifteen feet from the present location. A wooden spillway, consisting of a floor and timbered walls and made to the same dimensions in section as the gate bulkhead, should be installed in the canal from the gate to a point in line with the south edge of the garden. The banks on both sides should be filled to the spillway walls. These walls and the control gate bulkhead, to which they are attached, should come nearly to the top of the canal banks. (Gauge to the level of the carriage drive in front of the house.) South of the control gate a wooden bridge, wide

enough for carriage traffic should be built across the canal and fitted with side rails. The bridge timbers should rest on the sluiceway walls and the floor of the bridge should have the same elevation as the road bed it serves.

2. A water gate should be installed in the canal at the lower end of the park property at the point where the relocated lakeshore road will cross the canal, in order that a head of water may be maintained in the upper end of the canal for purposes of historical authenticity and attractive appearance. (There is certain evidence that such a level of water was usually held in this part of the canal to supply water power for the machinery located at the mills a quarter of a mile from the lakeshore.) For this gate it will not be necessary to duplicate the early wooden type of mechanism. The steel mechanism of the present gate at the lake shore can be used. This substitution is all right because this gate will be outside the historical area proper.

Main Dwelling Lot:

1. Restore the Colony House to its original state by removing plumbing, lighting fixtures and other modern features.

2. Remove the septic tank located between the Colony House and the Ice House, and restore the drainage channels and other features as indicated on the ground.

3. Remove the above-ground power lines from the garden. If electric power is to be maintained at the exhibition buildings, the service lines should be put underground.

4. Remove the water pump and tank from the Smoke House, and clear the other original buildings of stored materials.

5. When the lakeshore road on the lawn is relocated, the pavement on the carriage drive from the entrance of the proposed parking lot to the northeast corner of the garden enclosure should be removed and the carriage drive restored to its original width and level (gauging to the restored drive from this point to the mansion house). Following this, the fence and the walk on the carriage drive should be extended northward to the border of the proposed parking lot, and the walk leading from the Overseer's House to the carriage drive should be extended to join with the walk on the carriage drive. It will be necessary to install gates (one for the driveway and one for the walk) to serve the "street" which connects with the main carriage drive at this point. These gates should be modeled after the gates in the picket fence behind the mansion house, recently erected.

6. When the carriage drive has been narrowed to its original width at this point, it will be possible then to excavate and expose the brick culvert under the "street" drive which originally carried the big ditch on the east side of the garden (alongside the canal bank) on down the line indicated for it. This culvert should be rebuilt according to the findings made during excavation, and the ditch carried on to the border of the parking lot, whence it may be carried underground to connect with drainage channels below the park area. When the canal is filled with water (as under item 2 under "The Canal" above), it will be necessary to plug the tile that now connects the canal with the garden ditch, to prevent flooding of the lower garden from the canal. It is necessary that the garden ditch, which carries all

drainage from the main dwelling lot and the garden area, be carried through the old brick culvert and given an outlet below the historical area. If this is not done, there will be no drainage outlet for the dwelling lot and garden.

Facilities for Tourists and Picnicking:

1. Perhaps the most logical place for these facilities is the lakeshore area between the historical area as now defined and the Thirty Foot Canal. This location would hold the maintenance and surveillance work to a minimum, because it would contribute to a rather tight concentration of historical and recreational development in a limited area. Yet the concentration would not seem to mix the historical and the recreational aspects to an objectionable degree. This view is based on the thought that it would be well to reconstruct several of the slave quarters that stood in this area for use as tourist cabins and for other purposes. The cabins could be made to duplicate the original exterior appearance of the slave cabins but be arranged inside for modern use as guest cabins. One of the cabins might be used as public toilets to serve both the historical and the recreational areas. The cabin nearest to the historical area proper should be authentically restored inside and outside and furnished as a historical exhibit. The wooded area in front of the slave quarters and the open area behind them, and possibly the small wooded plot in the field near Thirty Foot Canal, could be developed as picnic areas.

APPENDIX I

INVENTORY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY OF JOSIAH COLLINS III (1863)

Note: When Collins died in 1863 the family was living in Hillsboro as refugees. Collins' will was not probated until 1866, after Mrs. Collins had returned to Lake Phelps following the war. It may be that the inventory was not made until 1866, in which case the personal property listed in the inventory reflected losses from looting during the years when the family was away.

Cash in Confederate money-\$5,659.30	2 pr. andirons
Chain and seal	1 desk
1 gold pencil	1 barometer (broken)
1 set gold studs	1 passage lamp
6 pr. linen sheets	3 sofas
6 pr. cotton pillow cases	3 T. Co
4 damask table cloths	1 Elergen
1 pr. pillows	2 what nots
2 bed spreads	1 music stand
3 blankets	1 worked screen
10 bedsteads	1 hat rack
16 washstands	6 flower stands
3 dressing tables	1 pr. globes
7 bureaus	1 chain and compass
7 towel stands	4 rustic chairs
3 presses	2 iron sofas
1 ward robe	2 iron vases
1 crib	4 waiters
1 cot	1 pr. bronzed candlesticks
12 tables	2 pr. plated candlesticks
1 stand	1 refrigerator
12 mahogany chairs	3 prs. steps
19 common chairs	1 stove
2 family portraits	1 spring board
11 pictures	1 lot broken harness
1 lot engravings	1 lot old lamps
1 secretary	1 lot wire
4 bookcases (mahogany)	1 set candle moulds
4 bookcases (plain)	1 lot old axes
6 pr. shovel and tongs supporters	2 demijohns
1 school desk	1 lot hogshead
1 cupboard	1 lot old hoes
4 settees	1 lot old rakes
1 large water bucket	1 lot old brier hooks
2 foot tubs	2 old stoves
2 looking glasses	1 Bbl. plaster paris
2 trunks	1 lot old ploughs
4 screen frames	1 lot old scoops
1 picture frame	1 lot old forks
2 fenders	1 lot old crosscut saws

1 lot broken furniture	1 lot old shovels
1 piano	1 lot wheel timber
1 lot silver (566 oz.)	1 lot old iron
1 lot books and pamphlets	1 lot old brass
3 iron pots	1 lot whip saws
1 lot trace chains	1 lot old harness
1 old straw cutter	1 fire engine and hose, etc.
1 lot ox chains	1 lot swingle trees
1 lot ox yokes	1 lot old harrows
6 wheat fans	1 lot old flax seed
1 thrashing machine	5 wagons
1 ox cart	3 old horse carts
3 grind stones	1 lot old cart wheels
1 old horse hoe	1 lot hubbs
1 corn planter	2 horse rakers
1 set blacksmith's tools	1 Carry Long [log carrying wagon]
1 pr. heavy log wheels (new)	2 old wheat drills
1 garden roller	1 barouche & harness
1 rockaway & harness	1 wagon (mountain)
1 wagon (Pea Green)	1 set carpenter's tools
1 flat	1 pr. balances
2 half-bushel measures	1 lot hogs
1 lot sheep	8 work steers
20 milch cows	1 lot cattle
1 lot old mill stones	3 crow bars
1 log chain	1 bush puller
1 lot old _____	36 mules
3 horses	189 negroes

"Good Debts"

1 note of J. F. Cain \$500 due 1st Jany, 1866 payable in Confederate money ¼ only due	\$125.00
1 note of J. F. Cain \$465, due 1st Jany, 1865 payable in Confederate money	\$465.00
1 note of E. Alethia Collins \$600 due March 20 th , 1854	\$600.00
1 note of E. Alethia Collins \$1400 due 24 th Jany, 1853 subject to credit \$687.36 1st. Feb. 1853	\$712.64
1 note of W. A. Littlejohn \$15.25 7 April 1841	15.25
1 note of W. A. Littlejohn and A. C. Blount \$200 with interest from 22nd Jany 1855	\$200.00
1 note of W. Hardison, D. G. Coward & Lloyd Bate- man, \$250. due 19 th Dec. 1860 subject to credit of \$50, 19 th Dec. 1860	200.00
1 note Jesse Sawyer \$195. Interest from 23rd May, 1857	195.00
1 note Rev. A. A. Watson \$57 without interest pay- able in gold	57.00

"Doubtful Debts"

1 note of John Thompson \$3450, Int. from 1st Jany 1856 subject to credit of \$207 1st Jany 1857	3243.00
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1 note Joshua Stacey \$50 due July 20	50.00
1 note J. W. Rogerson \$50. Int from 25 April, 1861	50.00
1 note Jes. G. Bacon due 1st Jany 1866, 1¼ BBL corn to be delivered in Hillsboro	
1 note S. Crawford 1st Jany 1866 1½ Bbls corn to be delivered in Hillsboro	
Note in hand of W. A. Eton from sales of Perishable property at Henry Skiny [?]	736.00

"Worthless Debts"

1 note of J. A. Warrock \$50 due 3rd June 1851	50.00
1 note of Eliz. Alexander \$20 due 21 Apl 1852	20.00
1 note of H. W. Collins \$210 due 1 Jany 1855	210.00
1 note of J. T. Hassell \$75 due 19 Aug 1858	75.00
1 note of Ellsbury Ambrose \$25 due 24 Sept. 1846, subject to following credits \$2.50, 29 Decr. 1849, \$15, 26 Jany 1848, \$2.62, 15th Feb. 1850	4.88
1 note of H. F. Brown \$50 Octr. 19th 1844	50.00

APPENDIX II

Will of Josiah Collins I (1819)
Will of Josiah Collins III (1863)
Will of Mary Collins (1872)

SUMMARY OF THE WILL OF JOSIAH COLLINS I (Chowan County Will Book C, pp. 73-76)

To Elizabeth Cook, daughter, residing in Somersetshire, England,
\$300 per year for life.

To each of Elizabeth's five children \$200 per year for education, etc., till the girls are 18 and the boys 21.

To the five Cook children \$20,000, share and share alike, when they reach 18 and 21 years of age.

To nephew Josiah Collins, Somersetshire, England, \$1,000.

To granddaughter Elizabeth Littlejohn the tan yard at Edenton with all equipment and goods in the yard.

To the two children of Elizabeth Littlejohn \$3,000 each.

To granddaughters Ann C. Blount and Elizabeth Littlejohn the Holly Grove tract of land 5 miles from Edenton in Chowan County.

To the seven children of Josiah Collins, Jr., as they come of age, \$5,000 each.

To son Josiah, Jr. during his lifetime the land on Lake Phelps with all improvements. Also all the negroes, "upwards of one hundred in number," for his lifetime.

To Josiah's seven children after their father's death the land at Lake Phelps, to be divided according to a map appended to the will. The seven children are: Ann Daves, Mary Matilda, Josiah, Henrietta Elizabeth, Hugh Williamson, John Daves, and Louisa Collins.

To son Josiah his $2/3$ of the undivided tract adjoining Edenton known as the Rope Walk tract, plus 9 acres adjoining the Rope Walk, deeded to him in 1790 by Samuel Johnston.

To daughter-in-law Ann Rebecca Collins the household and kitchen furniture.

To son Josiah the five lots in Edenton.

To the Episcopal Church in Edenton \$1,000.

For the poor of Chowan County \$1,000.

To Hannah Pritchard of Edenton \$500.

The residue of lands and lots to be sold and the proceeds used to pay the cash gifts devised.

Appoints son Josiah and James Iredell executors.

"This is the last Will and Testament of Josiah Collins of the county of Washington in the State of North Carolina.

"First I leave under the control and management of my dearly beloved wife, Mary Collins, my entire estate of every kind and description, with full and absolute power and authority to her, to use, occupy, possess and manage the same, without being accountable to any person or persons whatsoever, and I also give her full and absolute power and authority to give, sell, exchange or dispose of the same, or any part thereof, to any one or more of my children, as she may deem necessary and proper; And should she not dispose of the same in her lifetime, I give her absolute power and authority to bequeath and devise the same, by a last will and testament, in such manner as to her may seem proper.

"Should my wife die without having disposed of my estate by a last will and testament or otherwise, then and in that event I give to my son, Josiah Collins my plantation known as Somerset Place, lying on Lake Scuppernong or Lake Phelps, intending to include therein, all the lands that I own, lying between the said lake and Scuppernong River, adjoining on the west the lands devised to Ann D. Collins by her grandfather, Josiah Collins, the lands of Noah Phelps, Jesse Sawyer, Maxm Tatum, the lands belonging to the heirs of Dempsey Spruill, and also binding [sic] on the east South Fork Creek, and adjoining also the lands belonging to Daniel Woodley and the lands that belonged to the late Ebenezer Pettigrew; not intending by the foregoing description to include the other lands that I own lying on the said Lake; together with all the slaves, horses, mules, cattle, sheep and hogs, machinery, tools, farming implements and utensils of every kind and description, employed upon, or used in connection with the said farm; and I also give to my said son all my household and kitchen furniture of every kind and description, my carriages and other vehicles, my saddles, harness and gear; And of which property, both realty and personalty, together with all my other estate in North Carolina and elsewhere And with all the increase and profits of the same, I direct to be valued by three disinterested persons, having no interest in the same, to be appointed by the Justices of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of said County; and in making said valuation, I authorize said Commissioners to act upon evidence furnished by exparte affidavits or otherwise that may be satisfactory to them; And as to one half of the value of all the property which I have given to my said son, Josiah Collins, by this my last will and testament I direct him to pay the same to my other children in ten equal annual payments, with interest from the time that said valuation shall be made, so that the whole amount shall be paid off at the expiration of ten years from the time of making the said valuation. And with the view of securing the payment of the same, I charge the entire estate which I have hereby given my said son, with the payment of the amount that he may have to pay my other children. Provided nevertheless, and I hereby declare that the foregoing devise and bequest to my said son, Josiah Collins, is made subject to the following conditions, that is to say:

"First: If the property which I have given to my said son shall by the valuation to be had as aforesaid, be ascertained to be equal in amount to one half only, or less, than one half of my entire estate, then and in that event, I give to my said son, to him and his heirs, all the aforesaid property, free from all incumbrances whatever, and I also discharge and release him from the payment of any amount whatever to my other children; and secondly:

"If by the valuation to be had of my estate as aforesaid, the property which I have given to my said son, Josiah Collins, shall be ascertained to amount to less than a child's part of my entire estate, then in addition to the property which I have given him, I also give him so much of the residue of my estate as will make his share of my estate equal in value to the shares or estates of my other children.

"Secondly, As to all the residue of my estate of every kind and description, I give the same to all my children, except my son Josiah Collins, subject to the provisions and conditions mentioned and specified in the first clause or section of this my will.

"Thirdly: Should my son, Josiah Collins, conclude not to take the property which I have given him, subject to the incumbrances, with which it may be encumbered (and it is not my design or purpose to impose upon him any duty or obligation to accept the same) then and in that event, I give the whole of my estate, of every kind and description, equally to be divided among all my children, share and share alike, to them and their heirs forever.

"I hereby declare that by the disposition which I have made of my estate, it is not my wish or purpose to control or limit my wife in the exercise of the discretion which I have confided to her, or of the power and authority which I have given to, and conferred upon her in the first clause or section of this my will.

"Fourthly, I hereby nominate, constitute and appoint my wife Mary Collins, the executrix of this my last will and testament and testamentary guardian to my children; And in the event of her death, I appoint by son Josiah Collins, the executor of this my will and testamentary guardian of my other children.

"In testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand to this my last will and testament this 11th day of January 1849."

"In the name of God - Amen.

"I, Mary Collins of the County of Washington and State of North Carolina, do set forth this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking any Wills heretofore made by me.

"I hereby give and bequeath to my son Arthur Collins all my estate real and personal absolutely and in fee-simple, including every claim or balance due to me from any person or in any way whatever.

"and I do hereby declare that I do not intend by this disposition any injustice to my other children but I think my son Arthur at this time more in need of what I may have to leave him than my other sons are.

"In testimony whereof I do hereto set my hand and seal this 22nd Day of March 1869."

/S/ Mary Collins

APPENDIX III

DR. EDWARD WARREN'S ACCOUNT OF LIFE AT SOMERSET PLACE, FROM HIS BOOK ENTITLED A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCES IN THREE CONTINENTS (BALTIMORE, 1885)

Mr. Josiah Collins, who lived on Lake Scuppernong, in Washington County, regularly employed us, and to reach his house the sound had to be crossed and a journey of thirty-five miles made by land. This gentleman and his place require more than a passing notice, as he was an extraordinary man, and it was one of the most beautiful estates in the South.

His grandfather came from England at an early period in the history of the Colonies and settled at Edenton, where by his intelligence, energy and character he acquired a princely fortune and left an honored name. His son who succeeded him was a fit representative of his father, having married a lady belonging to one of the best families of New Berne, he raised a large family of children, each one of whom possessed remarkable gifts of mind and person. The ladies of the family were especially distinguished for their beauty, their intelligence and their accomplishments, while their house was the center of society for that section of the State - and a more delightful and hospitable one cannot be conceived of. As they regularly visited the principal cities and watering-places, and had in addition to their charm of person and character large fortunes in their own right, they were the greatest belles in that part of the country. They had, in fact, many offers of marriage, and it was a rare thing for the town not to have as a visitor some stranger of distinction who was seeking to ally himself with that family. The fortunate suitors were the Honorable William B. Shepard, Dr. Matthew Page, Dr. Thomas A. Harrison

and Dr. Thomas D. Warren, the latter being a near relative of my father.

The sons were also splendid types of humanity, possessing fine physiques and good minds improved by excellent educations.

Hugh W. Collins, the second son, stood six feet and two inches in his stockings, and though of herculean proportions his figure was symmetrical and his carriage remarkably graceful. He had besides an exceedingly handsome and attractive face, with the regular features, soft blue eyes, and a smile of peculiar fascination, while his head was a faultless development, covered with a profusion of sunny curls, and sat on his shoulders like that of an Apollo. Though he was as lavish with his means as a prince, as gentle in nature as a girl, and as gay of spirit as a bird, he was brave to rashness, and as chivalrous as any Plumed Knight. He excelled in everything. He was the strongest man, the best horseman, the deadliest shot, the finest boxer, the fleetest skater, the greatest beau, and the most eloquent speaker in his section. His memory, also, was something phenomenal, retaining everything with absolute fidelity, and rendering him a perfect encyclopedia. Nature, in truth, had been lavish with him, and having in his early days appreciated her bounty, he grew up a second Crichton:

.

And yet with all this promise and these splendid gifts, he never rose to be more than a member of the legislature, and he died at a comparatively early age, with but a modicum of fame and an estate in ruins. His manhood was consecrated to the

greatest intentions - to dreams which were to be realized; his generosity was abused by friends who lived upon his bounty and made returns only in promises; his geniality but served to cripple his talents and to destroy his health, and his career, which ought to have been as refulgent as the march of the sun, was simply dazzling like the flight of a meteor.

He died in 1854 in the old mansion at Edenton, of dropsy resulting from cirrhosis of the liver; and as I saw his magnificent frame and his splendid intellect succumb to the King of Terrors, I could but reflect upon the insignificance of humanity and learn a lesson of humility which I have never forgotten.

Josiah Collins, the eldest son, though totally different from his brother, possessed many remarkable traits of character. He was a man of high principles, brilliant intellect, great kindness of heart, and extraordinary capacity for business, but the predominating trait in his character was pride. The senior member of the family, and having imbibed his father's English ideas and convictions, he regarded himself as the representative of every excellence which appertained to it. He esteemed his blood the bluest, his opinions the wisest, his tastes the truest, and everything identified with him the most perfect that the world contained. He was an autocrat with a will as imperious and a sway as absolute as the Czar himself; but, though impatient and arbitrary when antagonized, he was the soul of courtesy, amiability and kindness when unopposed. Indeed, such a fascination of manner, courtliness of bearing, fluency in conversation, facility of adaptation to circumstances and geniality of disposition as he could display I have never seen united in the same individual.

Somerset Place, as he designated his home, was a most elegant and charming establishment. The house was of modern construction and arranged with special reference to the comfort of its inmates. It was filled with costly furniture, interesting books, beautiful plate and treasures of art; surrounded by stately oaks and cypresses, and with a beautiful lawn on the one side and a spacious garden on the other. It was built immediately upon the shore of Lake Scuppernong, a beautiful sheet of water more than twenty-five miles in circumference and connected with the river of the same name by a canal of Mr. Collins' own construction. The farm, embracing several thousand acres of arable land, which had gradually been reclaimed and brought into cultivation, was as rich as the Delta and yielded annually a princely income. There were about three hundred negroes on the place, who were in a state of perfect discipline, while the greatest attention was paid to their comfort, health and general welfare, including their spiritual condition, for their owner was a staunch churchman, and maintained a chapel and chaplain at his own expense. Indeed, it was a constant source of interest to see the negroes flocking to church on Sundays, participating in the services - for they knew every word of the "prayer-book" - and partaking of the holy communion at the same table with their master and the members of his family. In my early days there were still living several old men who were known as "Guinea negroes," being the remnants of the cargoes of African slaves which certain enterprising New England traders had brought into those waters and sold at handsome prices to the neighboring planters. These antiquated darkeys

spoke a sort of gibberish, which was a medley of their original dialect and the English language, and to me was perfectly unintelligible. They retained all of their original fetich superstitions and were as uncivilized, even in their old age, as when they roamed in youthful freedom among the jungles of the dark continent. The negroes, generally, on this estate were of a peculiar type - a people sui generis. Having descended from ancestors who were originally kidnapped in Africa, and never having been brought into relations with other representatives of their race, they had retained many of the ideas and traditions of their native land. Though rampant Christians, with "the service" upon the tips of their tongues, they still had faith in evil genii, charms, philters, metempsychosis, etc., and they habitually indulged in an infinitude of cabalistic rites and ceremonies, in which the gizzards of chickens, the livers of dogs, the heads of snakes and the tails of lizards played a mysterious but very conspicuous part.

One of their customs was playing at what they called "John Koonering," though this was more of a fantasia than a religious demonstration; that it had, however, some connection with their religion is evident from the fact that they only indulged in it on Christian festivals, notably on Christmas day. The leading character is the "rag-man," whose "get-up" consists in a costume of rags, so arranged that one end of each hangs loose and dangles; two great ox horns, attached to the skin of a raccoon, which is drawn over the head and face, leaving apertures only for the eyes and mouth; sandals of the skin of some wild "varmint"; several cow or sheep bells or strings of dried goats' horns hanging about their shoulders, and so arranged as to

jingle at every movement; and a short stick of seasoned wood, carried in his hands.

The second part is taken by the best looking darkey of the place, who wears no disguise, but is simply arrayed in what they call his "Sunday-go-to-meeting suit," and carries in his hand a small bowl or tin cup, while the other parts are appropriated by some half a dozen fellows, each arrayed fantastically in ribbons, rags, and feathers, and bearing between them several so-called musical instruments or "gumba boxes," which consist of wooden frames covered over with tanned sheepskins. These are usually followed by a motley crowd of all ages, dressed in their ordinary working clothes, which seemingly comes as a guard of honor to the performers.

Having thus given you an idea of the characters I will describe the performance as I first saw it at the "Lake." Coming up to the front door of the "great house," the musicians commenced to beat their gumba-boxes violently, while characters No. 1 and No. 2 enter upon a dance of the most extraordinary character - a combination of bodily contortions, flings, kicks, gyrations, and antics of every imaginable description, seemingly acting as partners, and yet each trying to excell the other in the variety and grotesqueness of his movements. At the same time No. 2 led off with a song of strange, monotonous cadence, which seemed extemporized for the occasion, and to run somewhat in this wise:

My massa am a white man, juba!
Old missus am a lady, juba!
De children am de honey-pods, juba! juba!
Krismus come but once a year, juba!
Juba! juba! O, ye juba!

De darkeys lubs de hoe-cake, juba!
Take de 'quarter' for to buy it, juba!
Fetch him 'long, you white folks, juba! juba!
Krismus come but once a year, juba!
Juba! juba! O, ye juba!

while the whole crowd joined in the chorus, shouting and clapping their hands in the wildest glee. After singing a verse or two No. 2 moved up to the master, with his hat in one hand and a tin cup in the other, to receive the expected "quarter," and, while making the lowest obeisance, shouted: "May de good Lord bless old massa and missus, and all de young massas, juba!" the "rag man" during this part of the performance continued his dancing, singing at the top of his voice the same refrain, and striking vigorously at the crowd, as first one and then another of its members attempted to tear off his "head gear" and to reveal his identity. And then the expected "quarter" having been jingled for some time in the tin cup, the performers moved on to visit the young gentlemen's colony, the tutor's rooms, the parson's study, the overseer's house, and, finally the quarters, to wind up with a grand jollification, in which all took part until they broke down and gave it up from sheer exhaustion. Except at the "lake" and in Edenton, where it originated with the Collins' negroes, I never witnessed this performance in America, and I was convinced from the first that it was of foreign origin, based on some festive ceremony which the negroes had inherited from their African ancestors.

This opinion was fully confirmed during my residence in Egypt, for I found that the blacks in that country amuse themselves at Byram - the principal feast of the Koran - with a performance absolutely identical with that which I had seen in Carolina, save in the words of their "Kooner" song.

I also met there the exact counterpart of the old "Guinea negroes" of the Lake, and I was glad to see them again, as they served to revive the incidents and associations of younger and happier days.

Mr. Collins was pre-eminently a social man, and it was the delight of his heart to have his house filled with guests, and to devote himself to their entertainment. I scarcely ever visited the "lake" without finding a large company assembled there, having as good a time as it was possible to conceive of. Such a host of servants, horses, carriages, games, boats, guns, accoutrements, musical instruments, and appliances generally for interesting and entertaining people, I never saw collected together. His table was a most sumptuous one. It groaned in fact beneath the load of every delicacy that taste could suggest, and such triumphs of the culinary art as were only possible to the well-trained darkey cooks with which his kitchen was crowded, while wines of the most ancient vintage and liquors of the choicest brand flowed around it like water from some inexhaustible spring. His bearing under his own roof stamped him at once as a gentleman, for his greeting had in it a tone of sincerity that was simply delightful, while his hospitality possessed a spontaneity and a comprehensiveness which instinctively captivated every heart.

I regret to tell you that the war which he had advocated with such vehemence and deemed so necessary for the vindication of Southern institutions proved utterly disastrous to him. It drove him from his beautiful home; it ruined his magnificent

estate; it scattered his well-trained servants; it sent his beloved sons to the battle-field, and it consigned him prematurely to the grave, a brokenhearted and an impoverished man. He had his faults, for he was of a proud nature, and a domineering spirit, oversatisfied with himself and impatient in the face of opposition; but his virtues far outweighed his failings, and a braver, nobler and more magnificent type of humanity has seldom walked among men in any land or time. This may seem a fulsome eulogium to those who had no personal acquaintance with this extraordinary man, but it will be recognized as a true portrait and an honest statement by his friends and contemporaries.

My father was the intimate friend and the trusted physician of this family for nearly fifty years, and he has often told me that they were the best people he ever knew. They were certainly the most generous patrons that a medical man was ever blessed with, for their first thought when sickness occurred was to send for their doctor, and they were ever ready to remunerate him with an open hand, whether the service was rendered to themselves or the humblest of their slaves.

APPENDIX IV

Publications of the Southern History Association, V. 6, pp. 21-27
Washington, D. C., the Association, 1902

DISCOVERY OF LAKE SCUPPERNONG [SIC] (PHELPS), NORTH CAROLINA.

With notes By Maj. George P. Collins.

The following account of the discovery of Lake Scuppernong, formerly known as Lake Phelps, in Tyrrell and Washington counties, N. C., was prepared about a century ago for Dr. Hugh Williamson's History of North Carolina (Philadelphia, 1812, 2 vols.) by an author whose name has been forgotten. The name Phelps still appears on most of the State maps, although Mr. Josiah Collins (3rd) rebaptized it by its Indian name, Scuppernong, and by which name it should be known.

The following note found among the papers of Josiah Collins (1st) in a handwriting which appears in many of his papers and accounts, although it is not known for whom the initials L. S. stand, gives a more definite account in names and dates than the contributor to Williamson, and one which has been more generally accepted as the notes of Major Collins show.--Eds.

"Lake Phelps was first discovered, Aug. 23d, 1755, by Josiah Phelps, James Phelps, Edward Phelps, Edward Massell, John Tarkinton and Benjamin Tarkinton. Benjamin Tarkinton claims the discovery of the Lake by climbing a tree and seeing the water first--and Josiah Phelps claims the discovery by getting into the water first."

The contributor to Williamson says:

In giving a geographical account of the State, perhaps the following account of Lake Phelps may be worthy of a place in your History of North Carolina.

In the County of Tyrrell, which borders on Albemarle Sound, there is one of those large Swamps or pocosens, so often to be met within the Southern parts of America.--The one I am now speaking of, from its immense extent and impervious nature, has acquired the appellation of The Great Dismal, and until a few years past, this large Tract of Country was considered as of no kind of value whatsoever.

The Inhabitants who had been settled round its borders for more than a hundred years, had never ventured to penetrate it, to the distance of half a mile its bounds, 'til at last some Hunters, who resided near it, led on by curiosity, and in hopes of finding firm land within it, undertook to explore it.

The party, at first, consisted of twelve of the stoutest men in all the County; they had provided themselves with every requisite for such an expedition, and seemed determined to discover what was inclosed in the bosom of this dreary solitary haunt of Beasts; but on the second day at night, ten of these valiant adventurers abandoned their design, and left, to their two more hardy comrades, Mr. Josiah Phelps and his brother Joseph, the more honorable task of perseverance. These two bolder spirits, continuing their rout, found themselves the next day on the edge of a large Lake, where they spent several days in hunting, with great success.

This beautiful piece of Water is nearly of an oval shape; it is about eight miles in length, and nearly five wide; its Waters are deep, transparent and full of fish of the most delicious kinds; There is not a Tree or a bush grows in it, but it is bordered by a Forest of Majestic Poplars of the growth of Centuries.

The Lands immediately round the Lake, to the north and west, are dry and firm; at the distance of half a mile, they are lower, but of a most superior quality. The Lake is now called Lake Phelps, in honor to Mr. Josiah Phelps and his brother, who discovered it. It is about six miles from The River Scuppernong,

which empties itself into Albemarle Sound; and what is very remarkable is, that 'tho' at so small a distance from the River, the surface of the Lake is at least fifteen feet higher than the surface of the River. This circumstance induced Messrs. Josiah Collins, Nathl. Allen & Saml. Dickinson of the Town of Edenton to form themselves into a Company for the purpose of purchasing and improving the vast Tract of Land around this Lake. They therefore in the year 1787 [sic] bought and entered the quantity of one hundred thousand acres, and immediately set about cutting a navigable Canal from the River to the Lake; this great undertaking, 'tho attended with an immense expense, they completed in the space of two years. The Canal is six miles long, twenty feet wide and six feet deep; it admits the navigation of Crafts (constructed for the purpose) that carry fifty or sixty tierces of Rice; and any Vessel that does not draw more than eighteen feet water, may lay and take in her Cargo at the mouth of the Canal. By means of this Canal, all the Lands that lie between the Lake & the River, can be laid dry, or put under water at pleasure; these advantages have given those enterprising Gentlemen the most valuable River estate in America. They now have, at the head of the Canal, a considerable plantation in the culture of Rice & Hemp; they have also on the Canal, several Saw and grist Mills with other improvements, from which they are amply compensated for the vast expense and trouble they have been at, in reclaiming this great & valuable Tract of Country.¹

Notes by Maj. George P. Collins.

For the accompanying sketch of the discovery and settlement of

¹Williamson treats this subject to a slight extent in his chapter on the natural features of the State, See II, 181-183.

Lake Scuppernong, written to be incorporated in Dr. Hugh Williamson's History of North Carolina, the author's name has been forgotten: said lake called on the maps Lake Phelps, was restored to the old Indian name, Scuppernong, by the father of this writer.

The following errors occur in the sketch, namely: the fall from the lake to the river through Collins' canal, distance about six miles, is eighteen feet not fifteen feet; six feet of the fall occurs in the first quarter of a mile, where the mills were located. The fact that the surrounding lands could be located from the lake is said to have first induced the Lake Company to open the property which was first used as rice fields, this was afterwards abandoned because it made the negroes unhealthy.

The purchase and entry of the lands must have been prior to 1787 as my great-grandfather in his answer to a cross bill in equity of Dr. Dickinson says, "I went to Boston in the latter part of 1784 or early in 1785, among other matters of business to fit out the 'Guineaman'." This name applied to the vessel that brought the negroes from Africa who dug the canal. It seems very improbable that such a costly and important step should be taken prior to formation of the Lake Company or purchase and entry of the 100,000 acres of land--therefore the company must have organized and made the purchase, entry, &c., in the later part of 1784. The story of the discovery of the lake, as often repeated to me and in my presence by my father, Josiah Collins, (3rd of that name) is after Josiah and Joseph Phelps, and a companion named Tarkinton, had been abandoned by their companions, they pushed on in a westerly course and camped on a knoll of about one quarter acre. Such knolls were known in the swamp as "Chestnut Oak Islands," on which there were many marks of fire years back showing that they were camping places for the Indians, though the Tuscaroras were ignorant of the existence of the lake--the tribe or tribes preceding them camped and fished near and in the lake as evidenced by arrow and lance heads and broken pottery found in the edge of the water, when low. The island on which Phelps and companions camped is now distinctly visible in the upper western field near the N. E. corner of a grove left as a building site, when the field was cleared, distant about 250 yards from the lake; it was called the "finder's island." When Phelps, his younger brother and Tarkinton got breakfast next morning they gave up the search, determined like their fellows to return home,

but Tarkinton climbed a tree on the island and without thinking of consequences or his own fame called out, "there is the lake right there," pointing in a S. W. direction. One of the Phelps' brothers, I think Joseph, ran forward, jumped into the water and named it Lake Phelps. As above stated, the name Scuppernong was restored to the lake by my father. Tarkinton was the real discoverer, or first white man to find the lake.

At the request of the Editors, Major Collins has added some valuable biographical notes on Josiah Collins, (1st, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th), some of whom played an important part in the economic development of North Carolina.

Josiah Collins (1st of the name that came to America, known as Captain Collins, because of his becoming an extensive ship owner,) was born near Taunton, Somersetshire, England, August, 1735; emigrated to America, after death of his wife, about 1773; landed in Boston, after a short stay went to Providence, R. I., remaining about a year. He then came to Halifax, N. C., remained awhile and finally settled at Edenton, N. C., where January 1, 1777, he organized the firm of Collins, Stewart & Muir, who carried on extensive mercantile business. Capt. Collins bought the interest of his partners and wound up the business; he bought an interest in a rope walk at Edenton, which he and his son, Josiah Collins (2nd), eventually owned entirely. He sent his own ships to Russia, imported the hemp and furnished the cordage to rig the American Navy for the War of 1812, which was done in Edenton Bay. Capt. Edward Preble, afterwards the distinguished commodore of the American Navy, was master of one of his vessels, was a warm and trusted friend and was induced after much urgent persuasion to join the Navy, for Capt. Preble insisted that he was not fitted for that service, which was disproved afterwards by his success at Tripoli, in 1803. There were many curious and valuable presents in possession of the family brought by Captain Preble from China, Japan and the Mediterranean ports. [Preble's sailing instructions follow]: Josiah Collins (1st), about 1785 or 6, formed with Nathaniel Allen (father of Gov. William Allen, of Ohio, and grandfather of Senator Allen Granberry Thurman, of Ohio), and Dr. Samuel Dickinson, the Lake Company, to drain and cultivate the lands around Lake Scuppernong (Phelps). The Lake Company cut the first canal in the State from Lake Scuppernong to Scuppernong River. Captain Collins became sole owner, leaving the estate on the lake to his grandchildren, his son having a life estate in it. There is a tradition, how reliable I cannot say, that the Treasury portfolio in Washington's cabinet was offered to Capt. Collins, who declined, however, because he was too recent an immigrant to be free from suspicion of his motives.

Josiah Collins (2nd), born in England, Nov. 10, 1768, came with his father to America; he married at about 40, Ann Rebecca Daves, daughter of Maj. John Daves, and sister of John Pugh Daves, Esq., of New Bern, father of Maj. Graham Daves. Josiah Collins (2nd), was associated with his father in his business affairs from the time that he was grown until his father's death, and continued as merchant, manufacturer and planter until his death, Feb. 10, 1839; he was a successful business man throughout his career.

Josiah Collins (3rd), born at Edenton, N. C., March, 1808; married Miss Mary Riggs, of New York, 1829; moved from the ancestral home at Edenton to Lake Scuppernong and settled on the place left him by Josiah (1st), his grandfather, called "Somerset Place" from the shire in England whence the family came. He added to his landed estate and enlarged his operations; was very prominent in public as well as private affairs, and also as a church man. He procured the change of name of the lake from Phelps to Scuppernong, the Indian name of the district and river, and died June 17, 1863, at Hillsboro, N. C., a refugee during the Civil War.

Josiah Collins (4th), born July 19, 1830; died Feby. 14, 1890, was an attorney-at-law; first lieutenant ordance department, C. S. A., and brother of the writer.

Josiah Collins (5th), born June 17, 1864, resides in Seattle, Washington.

I will mention a fact that struck me when looking over the old papers left by my great-grandfather and grandfather, among which were lists of land entries, titles &c., that the names of the inhabitants of the five counties lying between Albemarle and Pamlico sounds are or were at the outbreak of the Civil War, the same as they were 100 or more years before and scarcely a family name that was not represented!²

Sailing Instructions for Captain Preble.

Edenton 9th January 1788.--

Captain Edward Preble,

Sir,

When you have loaded the Schooner Elizabeth of which

²This is true to a very large extent of the State as a whole.
Ed.

you are Master you are to proceed to the Bar, but as the Vessel will, I expect, be very deep, I advise you not to attempt to go over the Swash without reducing her draught of Water so as to prevent any risque-- Wallace, a Pilot at Portsmouth, has a small Vessel you may get for that purpose, if necessary--From thence, after putting your Vessel in order for Sea, you are to proceed to Martinico, and on your arrival there to enquire the marketts at that place and at the different Islands to Leeward, to which American Bottoms are admitted; and if you find that a greater price or even as much can be obtained for the Cargo at Martinico, or at any other of the Islands mentioned, you are to dispose of it there to the best advantage, if not, to go where the best price can be got, provided, after estimating the expenses that will accrue in consequence of going from your destined Port to another & the difference in the price of such Produce as you are to be directed to lay in as a return Cargo, you conceive it will be for the interest of the voyage--The net proceeds of the present Cargo, I wish you to invest in Molasses and Coffee of a good quality and an equal amount in cash if the latter can be taken on board without endangering the Vessel but if it cannot be done, you will lay out the whole amount in Molasses only--

The Rice on board belongs to Mr. Lawrence Baker, you will sell it for the most that can be obtained and invest the nett proceeds in Brown Sugar of a good quality if to be done without incurring the risque above mentioned, or otherwise, purchase Molasses to the amount unless he gave you any directions to the contrary when you saw him, observing not to hazard the top of the Vessel, and to keep his property separate from the rest of the Cargoe--

I request you will be careful of your Vessel & Stores,
frugal in your expenses and to make all the dispatch in your
power back to this Port those things being attended to you will
probably make a saving voyage, but a contrary conduct will make
it quite the reverse--

Wishing you a pleasant Voyage & a speedy return,

I am Sir your obt svt

Josiah Collins.

I hereby acknowledge the foregoing to be a true Copy of my in-
structions which I promise to adhere to Edward Preble Hertford
the 10 Jan 1788--

The Farmers' Register, A Monthly Publication, Devoted to the Improvement of the Practice and Support of the Interests of Agriculture.

Edmund Ruffin, Editor and Proprietor. Vol. VII. Petersburg, Va.

Published by the Proprietor, 1839.

No. III. Journey over the firm land of Washington county. First impressions of the great swamp, and Lake Scuppernong.

[No. 11 1839]

Somerset Place, Nov. 21.

Having been most kindly invited by Josiah Collins, esq. to accompany him to his place of residence, and promised his aid to enable me to see the swamp lands where I had heard had been made the most successful and interesting improvements by draining, I readily availed of his offer; and this morning we left Plymouth. Our road was necessarily on the only long and nearly continuous stretch of dry land in the county; and was very circuitous. All of the central and southern part of the county, through which a direct route would have led, is part of the great swamp, and of course impassable. The road is on the lower yet firm land near the shore of Albemarle Sound, and for 4 or 5 miles we were with a mile of it, and generally within a quarter of a mile, and in full view of the trees on the opposite side. The water however was but seldom and barely visible, owing to the low level of the road.-----

Next we reached cleared and well drained swamp land, under a heavy crop of corn, of which the growth covered a single field of some 600 acres. The rich soil was quite dry; yet its appearance, as well as the large intersecting ditches, and the yet standing dead

trees, all showed clearly enough that it had formerly been swamp of the same character as that on which still grew the native forest of gigantic cypresses, which bounded the prospect beyond the cleared land. A-head of us, and still distant, now were in view various buildings, so numerous as to seem a village. The increased rapidity of the current, as well as the ascending course of the road, which was now manifest to the eye, showed that the land was still more and more elevated. The mills on the canal, and some other large buildings had narrowed the view ahead; but when these were passed, and the upper termination of the canal nearly reached, its great and magnificent source, Lake Scuppernong, opened gloriously to my view, and a few moments after brought us to its margin. The position of the mansion house barely permits the passage of the road between it and the canal; and the house is also so near the lake, that the spray from its billows in great storms would cover the space between, but for the few cypresses standing in the edge of the water, and other barriers against the violence of the waves.-----

"Jottings Down" in the Swamps. No. 4 The wild swamp lands, and the lake.

[No. 12 1839]

Somerset Place, N. C., Nov. 23.

For the purpose of having a closer view of the great savanna, as well as for the pleasure of the excursion, I sailed across the lake in Mr. Collins' nice little pleasure boat. We approached the edge within about 60 yards, which was as near as the boat

could keep afloat over the shoal bottom.-----

No. 5. The general plan of drainage, as executed.

Somerset Place, Nov. 23.

About 1770, Josiah Collins, the oldest of that name, together with two other persons formed a copartnership under the name of the "Lake Company." They took up nearly all the surrounding swamp land, by laying their own patents, or buying the small patents of other persons, in cases where the land had been previously thus appropriated. The only tract which is not embraced in this extensive property, (which was more than 80,000 acres,) is the farm of Mr. Ebenezer Pettigrew, lying on the lake next to Somerset Place. The interest of the two other members of the copartnership was afterwards bought out by the elder Collins (the grandfather of the present occupant,) and the property has been divided among his descendants. Somerset Place, the individual and distinct property of Josiah Collins esq. is 3000 acres, extending from the lake on both sides of the great canal into the lower and still wild swamp land in the rear. A small part only of this has been improved; and the actual drainage and cultivation extends on the lake side over several hundred acres of the share of another member of his family. But the whole tillage and management is as one farm, and by Mr. Collins; and therefore it is not of his separate property, but of the cultivated land that will be spoken of as his farm. This explanation is perhaps uncalled for; but it is made to avoid even the appearance of mistake or erroneous statement of this head.

The digging of the great canal was the first work, and this was

completed about 60 years ago, by the Lake Company, at a cost of \$30,000. Its course is perfectly straight, so far as visible on the farm, and is at right angles to the side of the lake where it enters, and its direction is with the greatest descent of the surface of the land. To a quarter of a mile from the lake, where the water-power is used for the mill and other machinery, the level of the water is kept up, for a head. To that point, the water is kept in by its banks, and stands at the mills 6 feet higher than the cultivated fields on both sides. Below the mills, the water of the canal is lower than the adjacent land whenever the mills are not at work, and the full flow of water restrained; but higher when the flow is used or permitted, which is usually the case, except at night, and in wet seasons when it is necessary to afford a continual outlet to the rain from the fields. The canal receives the water collected from the land by nearly all the drains, through three several and remote channels; of which the two on the higher levels are kept shut, by close flood-gates, when the mills are grinding and the canal receiving its full supply from the lake, and are opened whenever that supply is shut out by a flood-gate across the canal, near its junction with the lake. Thus all the water collected by drains from more than 1200 acres of the arable land is shut in usually through every day, and only permitted to run out at night; and that the accumulation in the lowest ditch is not enough to hurt the arable land, is the strongest evidence of the dry state of the reclaimed land. The third passage into the main canal enters so low down, that it is left open at all times, the water in the canal at the

junction being the lowest where this supply enters. There is also another place of discharge from some of the drains most remote from the canal, at the opposite side through a small arm of Scuppernong river, which originally was the only natural channel, in usual seasons, of the surplus water of the lake.

There are five main drains, 8 feet wide, running through the land parallel to the canal; these are crossed at right angles by "leading ditches," 6 feet wide, and at distances of a sixth to a quarter of a mile from each other. The banks of these leading drains are all thrown on the side towards the descent of the surface. Of the "lake side ditch" which is also nearly parallel to these, the earth dug out was thrown to the opposite side, towards the lake, to help to form a road there. The design of this is different from the leading ditches, it being to catch the water which oozes under the road embankment, from the much higher and adjacent water of the lake. The banks of all these main drains and of the leading ditches crossing them are formed into good and permanent farm roads; and these roads, together with the main road of the farm, amount to 24 miles in length, and of course there are as many miles of the large drains. The rectangular spaces formed by these great drains, are again intersected by three-foot ditches running down the slope of the land, and emptying into the leading drains below; these are crossed by small and shallow "tap ditches" (such as are elsewhere called "grips,") at every 50 yards distance. Finally, the entire surface is ploughed into ridges, for corn, of 4 and 6 feet, with good water-furrows between. Thus the water-furrows collect all surface or rain water, and discharge it into the shallow tap ditches, which empty into the deep 3 feet ditches, and these into 6 feet leading ditches, and these into the 8 feet main drains, and

these into the canal, or the other and natural outlet. The tap ditches are only about four inches lower than the water-furrows, and do not obstruct the passage of the teams and ploughs. They are easy to dig, but require cleaning out after every ploughing of the field. The three-foot ditches are 2 feet deep, and the two larger kinds are 3 feet or more, and the canal, 4 feet. The water is so directed that each large drain discharges its proper share. All these kinds, from tap-ditches to main drains, amount to 130 miles in length of ditching, on the farm of 1400 acres drained and cultivated. The whole operation of the drainage seems very perfect. The soil, considering the loose texture of much of it, and its absorbent character, was surprisingly dry; as dry indeed as such soil, and of such a level surface, could have been expected to be, if free from all higher water.

No. 6. The soil, and its former and present vegetable products.

Somerset Place, Nov. 26.

The labors executed by the present proprietor in the short time that he has had possession (11 years) have been great, even for the large force and capital employed; and the performance has been the more remarkable as being conducted by one who was very young, and totally inexperienced. He has drained, and brought into cultivation 500 acres of the now cultivated arable surface of 1400, besides other and perhaps as arduous labors, which are not required on other kinds of lands. One of these was the clearing up the dead trees of much land drained before his arrival, in

addition to that labor on all the newer part. The killing of the trees of the natural swamp forest, and grubbing and removing the shrubs and small trees, is comparatively but a light job. But until the last of the gigantic cypresses so left yields to the wind, and is prostrated, there is a yearly recurring labor required to remove the fallen trunks.

The great size of the old cypress trees generally, and of other trees also, but more rarely seen, is beyond the expectation of any one who sees them for the first time. Very many are five feet through the body at 4 to 6 feet from the ground, and would carry a diameter of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet for 40 to 60 feet, the length of their trunks. Some cypress trees are much larger than these sizes. One in the field I was told was 30 feet in circumference, as high as the measurement could be conveniently made. The age to which they live, and their durability after death, are not less remarkable than their size. Mr. Collins has counted on the sawed end of a cypress log, more than 800 rings of the grain showing as many years of growth; and as this and others that he has counted were by no means of largest size, he supposes that their ordinary and natural term of life must be 1000 years at least. But this estimate does not go back to the earliest existence of some of the dead trees, by many centuries. There has been at least one generation of cypress trees which lived and died here before the oldest of these now standing sprang up. Of this fact I was shown several sufficient proofs, of which I will state the case proving the most ancient date. A trunk of a cypress, long dead, but still standing firmly in the cultivated ground, had been found by measurement to be 33 feet in circumference at 3 feet above the present

surface of the ground. The surface probably has been lowered nearly as much as from the mark of measurement stated; and this has exposed the upper parts of the roots of the tree, and also the before buried body of another prostrate and large cypress, over which the trunk of the standing tree had grown. The visible wood of the buried tree is still sound. These "ground logs," as they are called, are so numerous under the swamp soil, that it would seem as if the trunks of the more ancient forest, thus buried, were as many as the trees now standing above them.

The whole of the reclaimed land was, when taken into cultivation, of what is called "cypress and gum swamp." The soil to the depth of $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 feet, is very much like that of the newly reclaimed tide-swamps of James river, and is as much formed of vegetable materials. When new and in a dry state, this will take fire, and burn to the depth of 18 inches or more. But open and "chaffy" as is this vegetable soil when first cultivated, it produces very heavy crops of corn. The subsoil is of compact blueish clay, which becomes friable and fertile soil by exposure; but for this subsoil, the soil could not, as I think, be deemed a permanent possession. But there is enough elevation to spare several feet without injury in that respect; and when the soil has rotted away, as it does in time, and allowed deep ploughing to bring up the clay subsoil to the surface, a still better, and what I suppose will be a permanent soil, is thereby formed. In the oldest cultivated parts, the extent of this loss of soil and depression of level, though greater there, cannot be measured or estimated. But in the land cultivated this year for the first

time, though drained long before, the mark of the former surface can be fixed by the dead trees and stumps whose roots are now so far naked as to make it evident that the surface is already two feet lower than formerly. Yet the material of this soil, though rotten, is but little decomposed; and must lose much more in bulk before it is brought to the state of fine black mould, like the land which has been brought under tillage ten years or more. The first ditches which are dug in a new piece will barely reach the subsoil; but with every year's cleaning out, a little more of it is dug up, until most of the depth of the ditch is in the subsoil. But this rotting away, which would render entirely worthless (as it does our tides-swamps and marshes) any land which cannot spare 3 feet of its upper soil, is here productive of no greater evil than the necessity of continuing to deepen the ditches, so as to keep their bottoms as much below the subsiding surface as at first. This land will sometimes bring 12 barrels of corn to the acre, and often as much as 10 barrels. This year the crop is very inferior, owing to the ravages of the chinch-bug, and Mr. Collins supposes that it may not average more than 5 barrels. From the size of the stalks I should have guessed a much heavier product. The largest crop which he has made in any one year was upwards of 8000 barrels. The land nearest the lake is stiffest, (or seems to partake more of the nature of the subsoil,) and is the most productive in wheat. A particular portion has been known to produce 37 bushels of wheat to the acre. Still, however, this crop has been so uncertain that Mr. Collins has recently abandoned its culture, except on a small scale, for home consumption. One important cause of failure is the great growth of partridge pea. Another plant

which grows with remarkable vigor is chick-weed, which I have not seen abundant any where else. Here, after corn, it usually covers the whole surface with a thick matted though low growth, and being a vine, clings to and runs upon every thing within its reach. It is now green and in full vigor. It serves as excellent winter pasturage for sheep.

In a small part of the land, the trees had been cleared away at once, by being cut down, instead of the ordinary slow and gradual course of "deading" them, or killing them by cutting slightly around, and then letting them stand until overthrown by the progress of time and decay, aided by the force of the wind in storms. The former course has been found to be very objectionable, and is abandoned. The large cypress stumps will remain to encumber the ground for 50 if not 100 years, and more than any other tree, even if equally durable, because of their large size. All the roots of the cypress strike downward and deeply, none running horizontally or nearly so. Hence, even after the surface of the earth around may have been lowered by decay a depth of two feet, and of course as much of the formerly underground parts of the cypress exposed, still the lowest part appears to a stranger to be not of root, but of trunk, and merely shows a still greater enlargement of the always broad pedestal to the mighty column. Thus there are but few dead cypresses, or their stumps, which do not spread across the width of a five-foot ridge, and obstruct one if not two water-furrows; and many of the largest extend across more than double that width, and of course are serious impediments to the drainage of the obstructed water-

furrows. Long as the cypress resists rotting, it is a very brittle wood, and is very easily broken by storms. Scarcely can a large living tree be seen in the original forest of the swamp of which the top has not been broken off by wind, and replaced by a subsequent growth of different form. And the dead trees left in the drained land are generally soon divested of branches and tops, and reduced to a naked trunk of 40 to 70 and 80 feet high. This resists the wind much longer; but finally, by the decay and weakening of the roots they yield, and the trunk falls. The roots are broken in such cases not far below the surface, and the blowing down of the decayed tree leaves no deep or considerable hole in the earth where it stood. I saw measured one of the recently overthrown and broken trunks, which was 72 feet long, and all of clean body, below the lowest branch. This was 5 feet through above the swell near the root, or where the regular and very gently tapering form began. Another of less length of trunk was 6 feet through the body, measured as above. These were not selected as being of uncommon size, (for very many in the forest are said to be much larger,) but merely to serve as standards of comparison. For without using some such mode of comparison, a stranger would be deceived as to the general size. If one only of these great trees were found elsewhere, its size would strike every beholder with astonishment, and it would be supposed greater than it really was. But here, they are so numerous, and the forest growth and everything else is on so gigantic a scale, that the eye has no accustomed and known objects by which to measure dimension so large, and, by a slight and hasty observer, all objects would be supposed smaller than they are.

Rice was cultivated here by the Lake Company, to considerable

extent, and with good success. But the culture was found to cause so much sickness among the slaves, that it was abandoned. The successive parallel slopes, ditches and enbankments, formed by the "leading ditches" which run across the ground, afforded great facilities for flooding the land, and drawing off the water when desired, for rice culture. Subsequently, corn was the main crop, and cultivated for a long time successively on the same land. The present proprietor has found the very long continuation of this crop objectionable, and has commenced, as a regular course, to cultivate corn for three years in succession--and then to let the land lie out of tillage three years, and grazed in the middle one of these three years. He is very careful to cover up in the soil for manure all the rank growth of weeds, which now stand 7 to 8 feet high; and also the corn-stalks, shucks, and the growth of grass underneath, when corn is again to follow the next year. To effect the object, and enable the plough to cover so heavy a growth, it is first weeded off the beds (5 and 6 feet wide) by broad hoes, and drawn into the water-furrow, and then two furrows of a plough are run to throw the slices so as to meet on the weeds. This is very roughly and imperfectly effected; and after standing a while, two more furrows are cut in the same places, and the earth thrown again over the weeds, and then the balance of the old ridges reversed and the new ones finished. The corn-stalks are cut off and drawn with the grass into the water furrows, in the same manner.

Uses of water power. Mr. Pettigrew's farming and improvements.

Somerset Place, Nov. 25.

The extensive use made of water to save labor on this estate, is one of the most interesting subjects for observation. It has been already stated that the descent of the canal gives a head of 6 feet of water at the mills, at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the lake. Part of this power works a saw mill, and a corn and wheat mill of two pair of stones, with the bolting, and other machinery, &c., proper for the making of flour. Also the corn is shelled and fanned, and, though not now, formerly the wheat was thrashed, and cleaned by the water-power conducted to the barn and one of the great corn houses. Besides these more important operations, and for some of which there is daily use made of the water-power, it is also directed to crushing and grinding corn in the ear for horses and other stock, the working a circular saw, turning grindstones, and may be substituted for hand labor in various ways. When it is desired to prepare a cargo of corn for the Charleston market, there is no need of commencing until notice has been received of the vessel having arrived in the river below. The shelling of the corn is then commenced, by a shelling machine of immense power, then fanned, next lifted up by elevating machinery, from the first to the fourth story of the house, there measured, and then emptied through a spout into a large flat boat lying in the canal, which, as soon as loaded in bulk, is conveyed along the canal to the vessel. Thus the risk of keeping a large quantity of shelled corn in bulk is avoided, and, by the aid of water, all the operations necessary to load a vessel may be com-

pleted in a very short time.

It is not only the main canal that is used for navigation. The "leading ditch," nearly two miles long, which passes through the barn-yard, is made 12 feet wide for that purpose also. When crops are made on that part of the farm, that ditch is flooded by letting in water from the lake, (by a ditch communicating with the lake, and commanding the water by means of a guard gate,) the wide ditch is kept full by closing another gate at its outlet, and the crops of corn or wheat are brought to the barns in flat boats, with comparatively little labor.

There are three barns, or rather houses for holding grain only. Two of them, for corn, are of great size, and constructed with all the care and strength of materials necessary to resist the pressure of the weight of the contents. One of these is 100 feet by 60, and three stories high. The other is 80 feet square, and has 4 floors or stories above ground, two in the body and two in the roof.

It is to me a matter of regret that I cannot see Mr. E. Pettigrew, and acquire something from his store of experience and varied information, and especially as it regards this place, where he has passed his life, from boyhood to old age. He is absent from home. Mr. Pettigrew, the elder, commenced his labors, some 40 years ago, under all the disadvantages of his neighboring proprietor, and with the great additional ones of very limited capital and a small and weak laboring force. Under such circumstances, the extent and value of his drainage, clearing and cultivation and other improvements are wonderful, and his labors have been as pro-

fitable as they are admirable. The general plan of drainage is the same on both estates. Mr. Pettigrew formerly drained into Mr. Collins' canal; but has since constructed his own canal, of 15 feet width, which he uses in like manner both for navigation and for propelling mills and other machinery. He cultivates wheat successfully and on a large scale. As I am informed, he is an excellent manager and cultivator, and, besides his swamp improvement here, he has recently drained and brought under good and productive tillage a large tract of the "body land" and thereby created a fine farm, and an entirely new and rich source of agricultural production. If he who merely makes "two blades of grass to grow where one only grew before" is a benefactor to his country and to mankind, how much greater is his service who drains a swamp, or converts a worthless waste into a fertile farm!

Mr. Charles Pettigrew, the son, was also from home during the first days of my sojourn at Somerset Place. His return however enabled me to give a slight and rapid glance at his father's lake farm, but which was too much hurried by want of time, and also by bad weather, for me to attempt doing justice to its description, and therefore, the attempt will not be made. I will merely offer a few notes on some of the most striking objects.

The farm of Mr. E. Pettigrew lies alongside of his neighbor's, and their mansions are not half a mile apart. In both, there is the like position of the buildings near the border of the lake, and the same general plan of drainage. Mr. Pettigrew's main canals being smaller, (15 feet wide) he requires more of them. Accordingly, he has already two, parallel to each other, and together about nine miles in

length; and is he [sic] about to dig another which will be nearly half as much more. Part of his drained and cleared land was of savanna, as is still the wild land immediately adjacent. The soil of this field is as black, as rich, and seemingly as valuable, as the best swamp. It is now suffering from the access of water from the unreclaimed savanna, which will be remedied by the designed canal. But this land has produced 10 barrels of corn to the acre, and when the remedy is applied, will do so again. The rotation here is the three-shift, without grazing; or 1st year, corn, 2nd, wheat, and 3rd, the natural weeds, which grow so rankly, (6 to 8 feet high, and very strong,) that the three-horse ploughs, which are used to break up the field for corn, cannot possibly turn them under without a previous operation. This is effected by the "weeding down" process mentioned in his neighbor's practice. The land is kept always in beds of 6 feet width, with deep and clean water-furrows between. The weeds are cut off by broad hoes, and drawn into the water-furrows, and then well covered by the meeting of the first two furrow-slices, made in reversing the beds.

The lake side of both the adjoining farms is alike protected by a low dike. This dike, with the bridges across the canals, forms a continuous road for two miles along Mr. Collins' farm, and apparently as much more along Mr. Pettigrew's. This road keeps near the lake shore, and forms, both by its situation and its decorations, one of the most beautiful and extensive promenades, either for walking or driving, that I have ever known. The road is perfectly level in its course, firm and dry. It is plant-

ed throughout on the side from the lake with rows of trees, which are of different sizes according to the date of the clearing of the fields along which they are planted. One of these rows, on Somerset Place, a mile in length, is of tall and noble sycamores, all of the same age and of very equal size. Another very long row of as large sycamores is on Mr. Pettigrew's part of the road. On another part of his, young cypresses have been left where growing naturally, and where deficient set out, on both sides, so as to form an avenue. Between the road and lake is a narrow and irregular margin under its natural and the usual swamp growth, among which are some trees of very large size, and others as remarkable for their grotesque form.

Neither the road dike nor the margin outside, fringed as it is with trees, could serve as a protection from the violence of the waves, were it not for the shallowness of the lake for several hundred yards from the shore. On this wide shoal the billows are broken, and their violence expended, before they reach the land. Still were it not for artificial safeguards, there would be yet left enough of power in the dashing of the broken and scattered spray, to produce great changes and do much damage to the land. This is exhibited along the lake shore where the swamp and its forest have not been touched by man. There, the deep indentations of water in some parts of the shore, and the ragged points of high swamp, wood-bound and defended, stretching out at other places into the lake--with the monuments of more ancient and extensive devastation and change presented in the position and forms of the old cypresses which stand alone and still living, though far out in the lake, or serve to protect by their roots and spreading base some yet remaining points of swamp--all show the great encroach-

ments which the water has made upon the land. After suffering much damage from slighter operations of this kind on the drained land, and the most strongly constructed defences having been found insufficient to resist the waves, Mr. Pettigrew discovered a mode both effectual and cheap, and which is used on both estates at every exposed point, or wherever the bank is so low as to need earth to raise it. The means used are "brush-bars", which are formed in the water close to the shore, by merely driving down perpendicularly a double row of small stakes, the rows two or three feet apart, and the stakes as far apart as will serve to hold the limbs of trees, or any rough and small brush laid between the rows and packed down closely, and rising a little above ordinary high water. The whole is made in the roughest and apparently slightest manner. Still, this feeble barrier serves not only to prevent the invasion of the water, but to repel it by forming more land. Perfectly clear as the water usually is, its violent action on the bottom in storms renders it muddy; and its sediment is left landward of the brush-bars, in such quantity as to form a considerable though slow accretion to the land by the deposite. It may well be conceived that the obvious and continual operation of the winds and waves for thousands of years may have greatly enlarged the surface of this and other lakes, while it also increased the elevation of the swamp land on the margins by throwing over them and leaving the earth which has been suspended in the water. The sediment being derived from the bottom of the lake, is doubtless composed principally of such earth as forms the stiff subsoil of the swamp lands. The earth most recently

deposited thus by the water has a singular appearance, and shows that the earth must have very peculiar texture and qualities. The fine and fluid mud left in the hollows of the ground behind the brush-bars, after sufficient exposure to dry weather, hardens and cracks, and separates by contraction into numerous pieces of a few inches across. When these pieces are not more than a quarter of an inch thick, they will become curved or curled by the further drying, and in color, shape, and almost in hardness seem much more like a piece of old shoe-sole, or some other piece of long exposed leather, than earth or soil. After being again wetted by exposure to steady rain for 24 hours, I found these pieces to be softened, and made flexible and somewhat elastic; but they had not lost any thing by the washing of the rain, and hardened as before, by drying. This same earth is found in small pieces, like angular gravel, on the surface and throughout the upper soil of the lands recently brought under cultivation.

No. 8 [No. 12 1839]

The negroes' chapel and religious services. A short lay sermon to the clergy.

Somerset Place, Nov. 26

On Sunday, the family and visitors designed to attend the performance of the customary public worship at the old neighborhood chapel a few miles without the swamp. But just before we set out, rain began to fall, and going abroad was thus prevented. It was therefore that I was invited to attend with the family the service in the negroes' chapel, which Mr. Collins has erected for the use of his slaves. A clergyman of the episcopal church resides here, principally for the purpose of imparting religious instruction to the slaves, but who also

officiates at the church in the neighborhood.

The negroes' chapel is a rude and rustic, but neat building, white-washed without and within, and provided comfortably, but in the plainest style, with the accommodations necessary for the congregation, and for its sacred purpose. There is room for 200 persons, and I was told that sometimes it is filled. But at this forenoon service, the house was not half filled, though the number still was as large as country congregations usually are. There was about the customary proportion of females to the males present, of about thrice as many of the former as of the latter. This alone would have told, if I had not been so informed otherwise, that the attendance of the slaves is altogether voluntary. Every thing is done to invite and persuade, but nothing to compel their attendance. One means, and I should think the most efficient, is that the master and his family regularly make part of the congregation, when not at the more public chapel, and they participate fully in the services and acts of worship.

APPENDIX VI

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOSIAH COLLINS I

(From Collins family papers, author unknown)

Josiah Collins was born August 1735 near Taunton, Somersetshire, England and was baptized on August 31st of the same year in St Mary's Church, Buckland Parish, Somersetshire.

His early life was spent in England, where he married Miss Ann Lewis, daughter of Isaac and Lydia Lewis, of the Parish of Breedwood near Woherhampton, Staffordshire, at the parish church of St Giles-in-the-fields, April 1st 1761.

His married life was spent at Ishington, London, and on the register of St. Mary's Church, Ishington, will be found recorded the baptisims of his children. Josiah was born Nov. 10th 1763. Ann was born April 6th 1765 and Elizabeth was born April 16th 1769.

His wife, Ann Lewis Collins, died soon after the birth of Elizabeth, his youngest daughter, and he came to America in 1773, not long before the breaking out of the Revolutionary War. He brough with him his two older children, Josiah and Ann, leaving his daughter, Elizabeth, whom he considered too young to accompany him, in the care of relatives in England. He landed in Boston with letters of introduction to business men of that city, intending to establish himself in business there. After remaining in Boston for a short while, he went to Newport, Rhode Island, where he lived for a year. He then came to the Province of North Carolina, going first to Halifax, a place of considerable importance at that time in the province of North Carolina. After remaining there for a short time, he finally decided to settle

at Edenton. On January 1st 1777 he entered into a copartnership mercantile business in Edenton under the name of Collins-Stuart and Muir. This partnership lasted several years and when dissolved, he continued in business, becoming a very successful merchant and in time a very large land owner and prosperous planter.

Edenton, though a small place, situated at the head of Albemarle Sound, had for those days considerable commerce and afforded many opportunities to a man of grasp and energy to improve his fortunes. Nags Head Inlet, though closed in the early 1800s by the shifting sands, was then the easy and natural outlet from the Sound to the Atlantic Ocean. This made it possible for vessels to pass in and out with valuable cargoes. Large quantities of tobacco, rice, staves and other articles of commerce were exported and imported with ease and the trade with the West Indies in sugar, molasses and rum was large and remunerative. He embraced these opportunities and established commercial relations not only with the West Indies but in time with Bordeaux and other ports of Europe.

In the unsettled state of affairs between England and America for several years, it was not always, during that period of time, safe sailing on the high seas. One of Collins' vessels sent out by its owner to some West Indian port, was captured by a British Privateer and carried into Kingston, Jamaica, the cargo seized and the ship and cargo was, therefore, a total loss to its owner.

Captain Edward Preble, afterwards Commodore Preble, so dis-

tinguished in the early history of the American Navy, was for some while in the employ of Josiah Collins, and was held by him in high esteem and greatly trusted. Capt. Preble was a fast and loyal friend of the son of Josiah Collins, Josiah Collins II, who was then just entering young manhood. He made several voyages to Bordeaux and other foreign ports with the captain. A copy of instructions issued to Captain Preble by Mr. Collins regarding a cargo that was to be taken to Bordeaux is now in possession of one of his great grand sons, George P. Collins, of Hillsboro, N. C.

Through the influence of his friend and employer Capt. Preble was induced to apply for a commission in the United States Navy, which he received. He showed by his subsequent successful career in his brilliant engagement when in command of the American squadron in 1803 off the coast of Tripoli that the high opinion of his friend was entirely justified. Years afterwards Commodore Preble met his old friend, Josiah Collins, and his grandson, Josiah Collins III, a lad of ten years of age. Grasping both hands of his old friend in his and with tears flowing down his cheeks, he turned to the young boy and said "Ah! Joe, I never feared the Tripolitaniens half as much as I would have feared any disapproval of your distinguished grandfather."

In 1783, Josiah Collins I became part owner in a ropewalk business adjacent to Edenton, one of the very first, if not the first enterprize of its kind in the entire country. He later owned the business entirely, giving his son a share in the business, which was found to be very profitable. Among the various orders for rope and cordage were orders from the United States Navy. After an embargo had been laid upon hemp, in Jefferson's second administration, he

deemed it best to close this part of his business, owing to the difficulty encountered in obtaining hemp, which had been hitherto imported into the United States.

At one time he held by patent 175,000 acres of land in Tyrrell and Washington Counties, all of which was heavily timbered in cypress and other valuable timber, selling it off as he thought best. Many of these maps and surveys are still in existence and are often referred to by persons desiring to locate lines and boundaries.

He also formed a company, known as the Lake Company, about the year 1785 or 86, with the purpose of opening up certain lands lying around Lake Scuppernong (Lake Phelps), which were also in both Tyrrell and Washington Counties. Josiah Collins, Dr. Sam Dickinson and Nathaniel Allen comprised the company. A large estate was cleared, grist and saw mills were established and a large canal, for transportation and drainage purposes, six miles long was cut by the company from the lake to Scuppernong River. Rice culture was for several years the principal crop grown on the vast acreage of developed lands. It appeared that the rice culture was injurious to health and it was largely abandoned and corn was substituted, which yielded large returns. After some years, the company dissolved and Josiah Collins bought out the other member's rights and continued to develop the estate. It was against the opinion of his strong personal friends and especially Dr. Hugh Williamson that he became the sole owner of this great Lake estate. Dr. Williamson thought that, with his energy, judgment and rare capacity for business, his friend would have acted much

more wisely by directing his efforts in other fields of service. These two friends were about the same age and died within a short time of each other. Dr. Williamson was one of the most highly cultured men of his day. A man of letters and attainments, he wrote the early history of North Carolina, and at one time represented the Edenton District in the Congress of the United States. Among the men of this section of North Carolina, no one stood superior to him in intellect or moral worth. It was the desire of Mr. Collins that one of his grandsons be named in honor of Dr. Williamson. One of Josiah Collins II's sons was, therefore, named Hugh Williamson Collins. It is said that this grandson resembled his grandfather in personal appearance more than any of the others. He was tall, six feet two inches and a finely developed figure in every respect, Anglo-Saxon in type and looked as though he had never seen America.

It had been the wish and intention of Josiah Collins to visit England after peace had been declared and the two countries were in a more settled condition. He made the trip to Boston with the intention to embark for England. In this he was thwarted, owing to the fact that the depreciation of money in this country made U. S. money valueless in England. With the decision that marked his character, he at once returned to the scene of his late labors, resumed his various pursuits and by renewed energy retrieved his losses.

Endowed with a vigorous intellect and remarkable judgment, his opinions had great weight. His financing ability made him a marked man throughout the country. It is said that his name was among those brought forward in connection with the naming of Secretary of the Treasury in the formation of George Washington's first cabinet. This

was learned through his friends and not from him. He cared nothing for high honors and worldly fame. The confidence in his integrity and judgment that the people who knew him had, caused him to be called on often to settle many estates. Many papers relating thereto were found carefully folded and marked "settled". Most of these papers told of people who had long since been gone.

He was generous and public spirited, giving his support to all laudable enterprises, and with a heart easily touched by the necessities and sufferings of others, his hands were willingly stretched out toward their relief. He was reticent as to his acts of benevolence. Many acts of kindness came to the knowledge of his family after his death. The old Colonial Church of St. Pauls at Edenton was in very bad condition at the beginning of the century but through the efforts of Mr. Collins, it was restored. In later years a memorial window was placed in the historic church by his grandson, Josiah Collins, his granddaughters, Ann Collins Blount, Henrietta E. Page (nee Collins) and a great granddaughter, Ann Collins Page.

Greatly interested in the cause of education, he took an active part in the establishment of Edenton Academy, which was completed in 1800. Among the legacies that he left was a handsome one to that institution.

In 1791, he carried out his long cherished wish to visit his native land. He remained in England amid old and familiar friends and scenes for more than a year.

His son, Josiah Collins II, when he had reached manhood, entered into business with his father and actively cooperated with him in all his various enterprises, whether of a private or public nature. He too, not unlike his father, was a man of force and ability. He was his father's tried, trusted and confidential companion and friend. The union between the two was of the closest kind, the son respecting his father's confidence with utmost consideration.

Josiah Collins II, in December 1803, married Ann Rebecca Daves, a daughter of Major John Daves of New Bern, N. C., a brave and gallant officer of the American Revolutionary War. This marriage was a source of great gratification to his father in his declining years. He lived long enough to see a family of young grandchildren gathered around him.

Elizabeth Collins, the youngest daughter or child of Josiah Collins and who remained in England, married a lawyer by the name of Cook and remained in England until her death. She resided at Hatch-Beauchamp, near Taunton, a place given to her by her father, who also provided legacies for her children as he did for all his grandchildren. Hatch-Beauchamp is only a half mile from the ancestral home of the Collins family.

Ann Collins, who came to America with her father, married in Edenton in 1788 Jacob Blount, son of Jacob Blount of Blount Hall, Pitt County, N. C., and died young leaving two small children, Ann Collins Blount and Elizabeth Louise Blount. These two children being left orphans at a very early age, were objects of special care and devotion by their grandfather. Ann Collins Blount never married. She lived with her grandfather and uncle at the home known as "Old Homestead." She was an important member of the household and at the death of her

uncle's wife, to whom she was as a sister, there being but a few years difference in their ages, she took complete charge of the family and was as a mother to the youngest child. Nobly did she discharge her duty to the family of her uncle. She ministered to each one as was needed of her loving care and attention. She knew not what selfishness was. She and her sister, Elizabeth (Mrs. John W. Littlejohn of Edenton, N. C.) both were women of fine mind and character. Their grandfather had taken great pains to give them the advantage of an excellent education.

During the War Between the States, the old homestead was closed after an occupation of more than seventy years by the Collins family. It was not built by Josiah Collins, but was purchased by him about the year 1788 or 1789. When the war was over, the old homestead came into the possession of a great grandson of Mr. Collins, William B. Shepard, partly by inheritance and partly by purchase from other heirs. It has since been bought by Mr. Frank Wood, of Edenton, N. C., who has greatly improved it and beautified it. Mr. Wood married Rebecca B. Collins, a great-great-granddaughter of Mr. Collins

The lands owned by Josiah Collins around Lake Scuppernong were left to seven Collins grandchildren, their father Josiah Collins II, having a lifetime right in the property. To the oldest of these children, Josiah Collins III, was given Somerset Place of 5,000 acres of land. The place was so called in honor of the shire in England from whence the Collins family came. This estate was developed into one of the most beautiful in the country, it being beautifully situated upon the shore of the beautiful

Lake Scuppernong. In the lifetime of his grandson and his wife, Miss Mary Riggs of New York City, a refined Christian woman of fine talents, Somerset was the seat of generous hospitality and elegance, culture and refinement. Truly it was an ideal home in which the distinctive feature of a highly religious tone prevailed. It passed out of the family many years ago and since its passing from the Collins family, it has changed hands many times.

It was at Somerset Place that Josiah Collins, the subject of this sketch, met with the accident that hastened the end of his life. Blessed with a fine constitution, he remained extremely vigorous in health, for a man of his age, to within a short time of his death. He received a fall while visiting with his son on his Lake property. The shock was too great for him to recuperate at his age, he being nearly eight-four years old. His active and industrious life was now fast passing. It had proved a great blessing to the community in which most of it had been spent and to the entire section of the State of North Carolina. He lived the life of a private individual but was a man of marked influence through the force of a great intellect and character. He returned to his home in Edenton immediately upon sustaining his severe injury and lingered there for a few weeks. He then passed on to his reward.

When his will was taken to him to be signed, he was too weak to sign his name but just attached thereto his mark, which was properly attested.

Being brought up in the Church of England, he died in communion with that faith. His life's work was finished and he gently passed away on May 14th, 1819, leaving an honored name to his descendants.

APPENDIX VII

SOMERSET PLANTATION SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

/1885/

Mrs. T. C. Holmes

Let's turn the pages of Time back sixty-five years and visit the historic old plantation known as the Somerset farm on the borders of Lake Phelps. Once owned and operated by Josiah Collins and his descendants, it was at that time owned by Mr. H. H. Page of Edenton, N. C. My father /Mr. Sexton/ was employed by Mr. Page to operate this tremendous farm.

It was in January, 1885. The sun shone through a haze. A cold wind was blowing from the north as I rode happily in a horse-drawn buggy up to our new home for the first time. The trip was thrilling. The drive along the beautiful Old Canal or Grain Canal was very interesting. From the gate that admitted us to the cultivated part of the farm to the Big Barn a row of stately elms and white oak trees, symmetrically planted down the center of the wide road, made two splendid driveways. This drive also served as the private race track for the Collins family. It was indeed a lovely ride with the canal on one side and the vast fields literally teeming with immense flocks of blackbirds on the other.

After a long and rather cold ride we came to the big four story barn, each story splendidly floored and broad steps to climb. It was in a perfect state of preservation and during our stay on the farm oftentimes furnished amusement for us children, climbing to the fourth floor and viewing the surrounding country from the windows.

The original driveway turned away from the canal at the corner of

the garden to the right. This road was called the Street. A nice brick sidewalk on one side of the road ran from the overseer's house at the end of the Street to the "Big House". On this street were the chapel where the slaves were spiritually instructed, a few other houses and a splendid two story hospital where the slaves were cared for when sick. All of those buildings except the chapel were used as tenant houses when we moved to the farm, most of them occupied by white tenants. Many negro cabins were standing down the lakeside and these were occupied by negro tenants.

The buildings were then in fairly good condition and the little chapel was even then looked upon as a sacred memorial to the past. Many Sunday afternoons Rev. Luther Eborn, the Episcopal clergyman, held services in it. Surely, the slaves must have been carefully instructed; many of them knew the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's creed and the Ten Commandments even though they did not know a letter in the book.

Now we pass through the gate and drive up to the porch facing the Lake. Hurriedly we ran in. I shall never forget my first entrance into this stately old mansion. In my childish fancy, the walls were more beautiful than any I had ever seen. The wall paper with its pink, blue and gold floral designs, hung long before the Civil War, was then in fairly good condition. A bright fire was burning in the large fireplace. It looked very cheerful and certainly was very comfortable. Quite a lot of the lovely Collins furniture was in the house. One or two of the bedrooms were furnished with very fine walnut and mahogany marble-

top furniture, also very pretty bedsteads and a quaint little whatnot, which was especially attractive to me. Beautiful pictures hung on the walls. There were several brass trimmed fenders in the house, also brass handled fire pokers, tongs, and shovels, two or three hung walnut secretaries and many valuable books. In the center of the lovely arch in the spacious hall hung a large chandelier. It consisted of just one large globe. A little round wooden candlestick holding one candle fitted perfectly, in this globe and gave a lovely soft light throughout the hall.

The living room fronting the Lake had been for many years used for the office. It was nicely furnished and heated by a big open fire. Many objects of interest were in the room. Shelves extended across one end of it. They were completely filled with relics of by-gone days. Those that interested me most were the bear and deer skins, also tremendous rattlesnake skins so carefully stuffed they looked like living creatures. These were labeled when killed and by whom. There were cotton stalks, a few containing fifty or more burrs, also fine heads of wheat and rice, all dated with the year raised and when cut. Several hour glasses and many clever little scales used to weigh medicine fascinated me. The candle molds used by the Collinses were also there in excellent condition. We were told some of the slaves used to spin the wicks and mold the candles that were used. They were made of tallow and beeswax. I am sure that if many of these relics were available today they would be invaluable to the State Museum. Very large old fashioned locks with brass keys and brass door knobs were on each of the hall doors.

Two or three large clumps of red japonica grew near the house and a beautiful large wisteria vine grew up the south end of the "mill race porch" as it was called. A brick walk ran all around the house and to the garden. After going through the house we hied away down the brick walk to the once beautiful old English garden. Many old-fashioned rose bushes, japonicas, box bushes, snow drops, jonquils, "butter and eggs", a beautiful old magnolia tree and a few other flowering shrubs were left to tell the beauty of bygone days. In a corner of the garden the very much delapidated conservatory stood.

The buildings in the yard were in a splendid state of preservation. First came the wood house, a long, large building used in the days of prosperity to store wood in. It was then used to house the driving horses and buggies used by the occupants of the "big house." Then came the colony, two dairies, a bath house, a wash house and a smoke house. These were all painted a light brown color just as the big house was. Quite a large place back of these houses was all bricked over and a large brick Dutch oven, as good as new, was built in.

The canal at that time was navigable for boats from the mill race to the river. There were three strong water gates to control the entrance of the lake water into the old canal. When they were all open the water falls were marvelous, rivalling Niagara Falls in beauty on a very much smaller scale. The land across the canal, opposite the house, was called "the Lawn"; large herds of cattle and sheep grazed on it. For one who loves the beauties of Nature, to sit on the Mill race porch when the

wisteria was in full bloom and see the cattle and the sheep grazing on the beautiful green lawn and the roaring water seething and foaming over the falls was a rare and picturesque sight. The waterpower turned a large grist mill that ground the corn, thus making the meal for the farm and the community at large. This same mill was built by the Collinses to supply the meal for their own use and for the hundreds of slaves owned by them. There was a good bridge across the canal close by the mill house. Joy riders frequented it; buildings increased and business traffic also passed through the yard over the bridge and on through the other farms.

A large cistern had been dug under the house for storing drinking water but we found it very inconvenient to use; consequently the water for drinking and all other purposes was dipped out of the canal. Many times if the wind blew in a northerly direction the water was muddy; then a man would go in a sail boat out in the lake and get the drinking water. Sailboats were used entirely for boatridding.

The Lake at that time was not visited by fishing parties and great quantities of large white and speckled perch, black bass and pike thrived in it. They were caught by weirs or pod nets set in the lake and fished every three or four days. Many fine fish would be caught and sold.

The vast acres were cultivated by the tenants, many of them living miles from the farm. The first few days in January were generally known as renting days. Mobs of men were coming and going all day, renting their land for the year. Cotton, corn and rice were the principal crops raised. Harvesting the rice was especially interesting to me. Many hundreds of bushels of grain were gleaned from the huge

piles of straw by a machine called a rice thrasher, drawn and operated by a large horizontal steam engine.

The herring fishery was another valuable asset to the farm. During the spawning season for herring, which was in the spring of the year, two of the water gates were raised, thus making the water higher in the canal. The herrings seemed to seek the lake water and would come into the canal in great quantities. When the canal was full of them the water gates were closed and a hedge put in the canal. As the water became lower the herrings would turn back toward the river and millions of them were dipped out with skim nets. A fish house was erected near the canal about a mile and a half from the mouth. Here the herrings were prepared for market. Poor people were allowed to fish behind the hedge and get their herrings for the year. A very large run of fish was expected on Easter Sunday. This was a very profitable and inexpensive fishery.

A few of the old slaves still lived on the farm; they never lived any other place. My story would not be complete without special mention of Luke Davis, known to everyone as "Uncle Luke". He was taken into the house when he was quite small and was trained to serve as butler. He was never happier than when working around the house. He lived in the past. His general conversation was about "Marse Collins" and "Old Missus". He would entertain us for hours telling about the gay house parties and company they had in winter, always giving special attention to Miss Louisa North, a great frequent visitor to the plantation. Uncle Luke pictured Christmas as being the happiest, gayest time

of the year. He said that on Christmas morning all the slaves assembled in the yard. One negro, who was known as "John Canoe" was dressed all ragged and funny. He danced and made merry for all of them. Then Mr. Collins gave him a bag of fruit and confectioneries to be given to each of the slaves. They looked forward to Christmas and "John Canoe" with happy hearts.

But Uncle Luke said it was not all happiness with the folks in the "big house". Old Missus saw lots of trouble. Two of her little boys were drowned in the mill race and "Marse Kent" was thrown from the back of a Kentucky steed and killed when he struck against a tree. The race track was the two way drive along the canal. Uncle Luke often showed us the tree "Marse Kent" was thrown against. He told us "Marse Collins" had a large chain securely fastened around the tree to mark it. It was a large elm. When I first saw it the bark had grown over the chain, making quite a ridge around the tree. Many of the beautiful trees that were on the driveway have blown down long ago and that tree was among them.

Uncle Luke said Marse Collins died of a broken heart up the country where they had gone as refugees. After the war was over Old Missus and "Marse Arthur" came back to the lake, but her beautiful home had been so robbed and desecrated by the "Buffaloes" and Yankees that she never lived in it again. They furnished the "Colony" and lived in it for a few years, then moved to the Western farm where she died.

During our stay on the farm the first of the Sunday School picnics was held up there. Large crowds attended them and sumptuous picnic dinners were spread on table cloths on the ground in the shade of the beautiful ancient sycamore trees. So the "old order changes

yielding place to the new", but although the glory of the past has faded, the memory of those days linger in the hearts of those who have known and loved the old "Somerset Farm".

APPENDIX VIII

MEMORIES OF LAKE PHELPS - 47 YEARS AGO

by

Mrs. S. C. Davis, Columbus, Ohio
(119 West Second Avenue)

I was a small girl when we set sail on the steamship Anchoris for our new home across the ocean, a new country, - America. I was too young to realize the importance of this vast and beautiful country, the words freedom and democracy, - but I was old enough to appreciate, to dream of what I might see and behold, and always thinking of the beautiful.

We arrived in New York about the fourth day of November 1890, and were met at the dock by my sister and brother-in-law, the late Harvey Terry, owner of the plantation on Lake Phelps, with whom we were to make our home. We spent a few days in New York City then sailed on the Old Dominion Steamship for Norfolk, Virginia. From there we took a boat across the Albemarle Sound, on up the Scuppernong River for Spruill's Bridge, near Creswell, N. C. To me that boat ride stands out in my memory as most picturesque and thrilling, - up this beautiful winding river. It was great fun to watch the men push with great long poles when we came to an abrupt bend. After many hours we finally came to Spruill's Bridge, the long drive to Lakeside Plantation, - for that was the name my brother-in-law gave it. It was seven miles, but to us the distance was very short for we saw so many new sights, - we saw so many little Negro children, the first we had ever seen, and they were picking cotton, which also was the first cotton we had ever seen growing. That was a beautiful sight - acres of the snowy white

cotton. Then the wonderful, tall Pine trees, - it seemed to me I had never seen any so tall and stately. One striking thing about the drive home was three rows of giant trees that formed two driveways to Lake Phelps. One driveway was used for carriages, the other for horse carts and wagons, along the bank of the Canal that was dug by slave labor for over seven miles from Lake Phelps to the Scuppernong River. We passed several small cabins tenanted by some White and by some Colored families. Then the great barn came in sight. It was in a marvelous state of preservation and there was a long row of stables much delapidated and broken down. As we drew nearer we passed three large houses that were used by the Overseers and their families. They were all in fair condition. There were about fifteen small cabins and they too were in fair condition. There was a long, low white building and we were told that was where they held services for the slaves. Also two bath houses, two smoke houses, three large store-rooms, a double summer kitchen with large open fireplace and a Dutch oven at the side, - all in fine condition; also spinning and weaving cabins. We learned all about these buildings from two ex-slaves, Uncle Joshua Bond and his wife, Aunt Ann. They were still living there and worked for my brother-in-law. Uncle Josh was the coachman and Aunt Ann was a maid in the big house for their late master and mistress, Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Collins. They told us many interesting stories of plantation days and what a good master and mistress they had. How happy and free from all responsibility. Later their young master, Mr. Arthur Collins, provided a new home for this old couple and cared for them the rest of their lives.

The Big House, for that was what the natives called it, had been sadly neglected and run down, but inside was in a wonderful state of preservation. We painted and made necessary repairs and soon the old halls rang with laughter, for we were a large family and found many pleasures in our life while we lived there. We built a fine new grist mill, some fine new stables and chicken-houses, - in fact, the whole place began to take on a new lease in life, but certainly it never could compare with the beauty of former days. When the first owner lived and managed this was a magnificent plantation. We could only imagine the lovely old mansion and the hospitality that abounded there before the War.

The people from Creswell soon began to call upon us and welcome us to their homes. The very first one was the late Luther Eborn, Rector of Saint David's Episcopal Church, where our family later became members. Among others who called were the late Dr. William Hardison, Mr. Samuel Woodley, Mr. Gus Walker, Mr. Max Alexander, Mr. Clyde Spruill and Mr. Jordan Sexton. We have always valued their friendship for they helped to make our stay among them happy and contented. I had the pleasure of visiting Lake Phelps the summer of 1935, and the old mansion was about all that was left to remind us of our first home here in America.

It would be wonderful if the place could become a State Park and the mansion furnished and restored to its original beauty. Certainly it would attract tourists and visitors from all parts of the country who enjoy nature and beauty in which the State of North Carolina abounds.

Jane L. Davis

APPENDIX IX

(Article from old newspaper in possession of Mrs. Ted Blount, Plymouth, N. C. Miss Kessinger was a relative of Mrs. Blount.)

THE MIFFLINBURG TELEGRAPH (Mifflinburg, Pa.), May 19, 1905.

SOUTHERN PLANTATIONS INTERESTINGLY DESCRIBED BY MISS MATILDA M. KESSINGER

Roper, N. C., May 5, 1905.

I have just visited some of the most beautiful and ideal plantations in the South, and thinking my friends at home would enjoy reading about them, I send this little description to you, and after reading it, if you have space in your paper to publish it, I will be much obliged to you.

For the last eighteen years I have been looking around for southern plantations to come up to the ideals of the plantations one always reads about but never sees. It has been said by consoling people that "all things come to those who wait." In this instance, that too has come true.

Along the shores of Lake "Scuppernong", as it is called by the natives, but the maps name it "Phelps", is a number of old plantations one reads and dreams of. We only visited two, but from this description the others can be guessed at, for they are on the same plan.

The first one we visited is called "Somerset", and was settled by Josiah Collins, an Englishman, descended from some of the famous Collins of that country, and one can never imagine what a little slice of the "Garden of Eden" would be like till they visited these old plantations. Five miles from the house we entered an avenue of trees, all tall and majestic looking. To the left

of us was another drive divided by trees of the same kind, size, and the same distance apart. And at the edge of the second drive was a canal, deep and dark, and on both sides of it was an even growth of grass. The road we drove on was as smooth as paved roads, and beyond the scenes described were great level fields as far as one could see, except another canal, some distance off, the same size as we were driving by. It divided the plantations. After driving four miles through this beautiful avenue of trees, we came to some buildings, then an immense barn, it had a brick jail on one side, used for the punishment of the slaves. This barn had four stories and an immense elevator to take the produce to the different stories. The beams were of immense size. About half a mile from the barn was a stately old mansion, built ninety years ago, and seemed so solid that ninety winters of storms were a joke to it. The verandas were long and wide, with tall columns supporting the roof, and the reception hall would cover the floor of an ordinary sized house. The rooms were very large, high and numerous. The mantels were made of onix (sic). Above the parlor doors was a carved picture of a colonial garden scene, and it was painted in colors like an oil painting. The woodwork in the whole place was carved by hand, even the door locks were handmade, very large and heavy, no machinery was used. On the three plantations were twenty eight hundred slaves cultivating an area of nearly twenty five square miles. Everything is so romantic till you reach the third story, then when you look on the floor and see large spots of blood, you think of "Rizzio's" blood in "Holy Road Castle." There is no queen in this tragedy though, only four in a deck of cards. Some man got cross because he did not get all the games, and killed himself. Let us leave

the mansion and go to the other buildings.

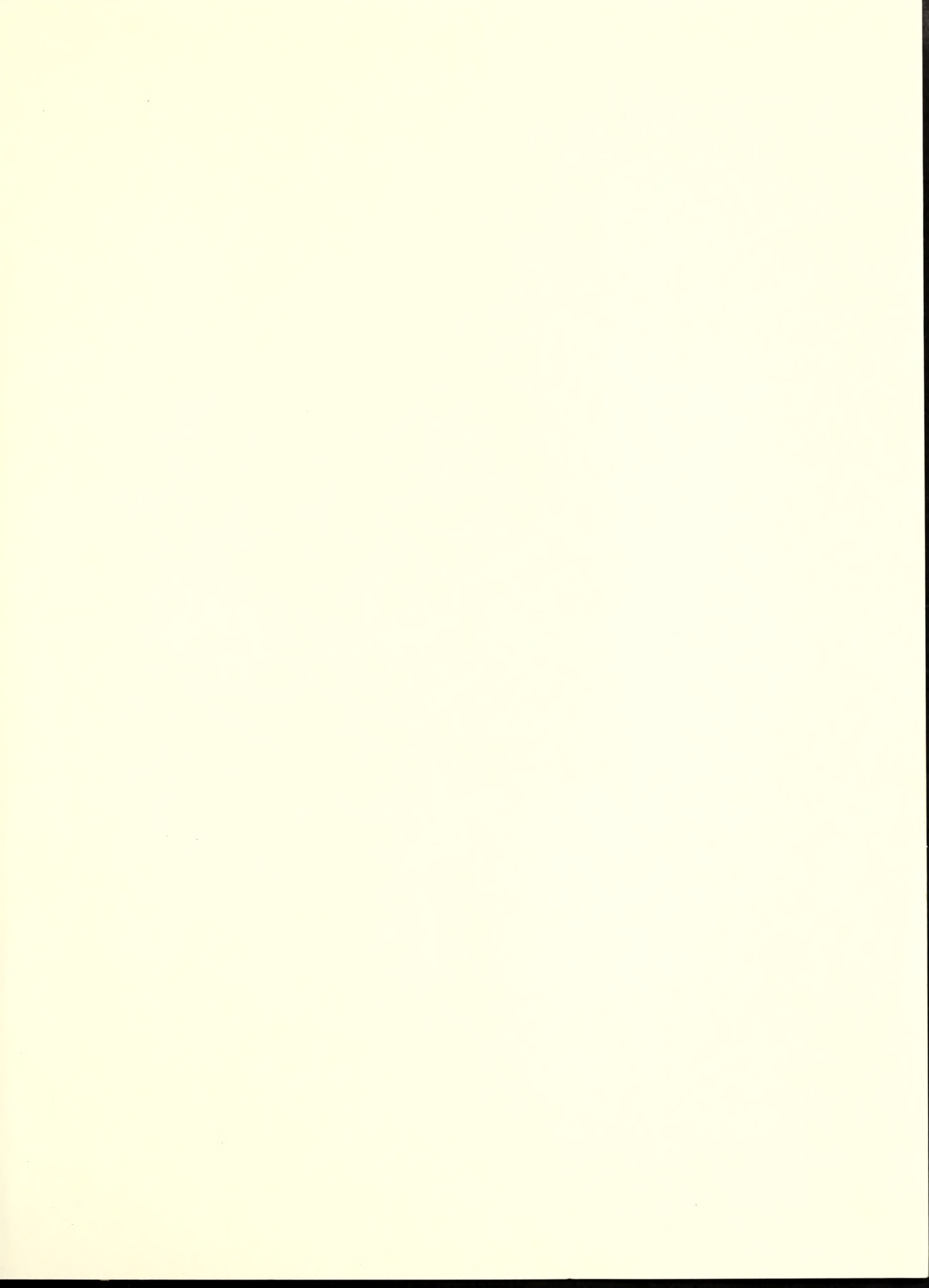
There was the house to cook in, the house to wash in, the blacksmith shop, the old cotton gin, and five or six other buildings, that had all kinds of queer looking shelves, and stalls, and kettles hanging up. Then there was the chapel that Bishop Pettigrew preached in, and where the late Bishop Watson began his ministry forty-five years ago. Bishop Pettigrew was the first bishop of North Carolina, as Bishop Watson was the first of East Carolina. Bishop Pettigrew was a friend of Benjamin Franklin's. He lived on an adjoining plantation called Fonava (sic), meaning "Rich Lands." All the Bishop's people are laid away in a very carefully made cemetery at one end of the plantation, with a large vault, expensive monuments, and tombs to mark their resting place.

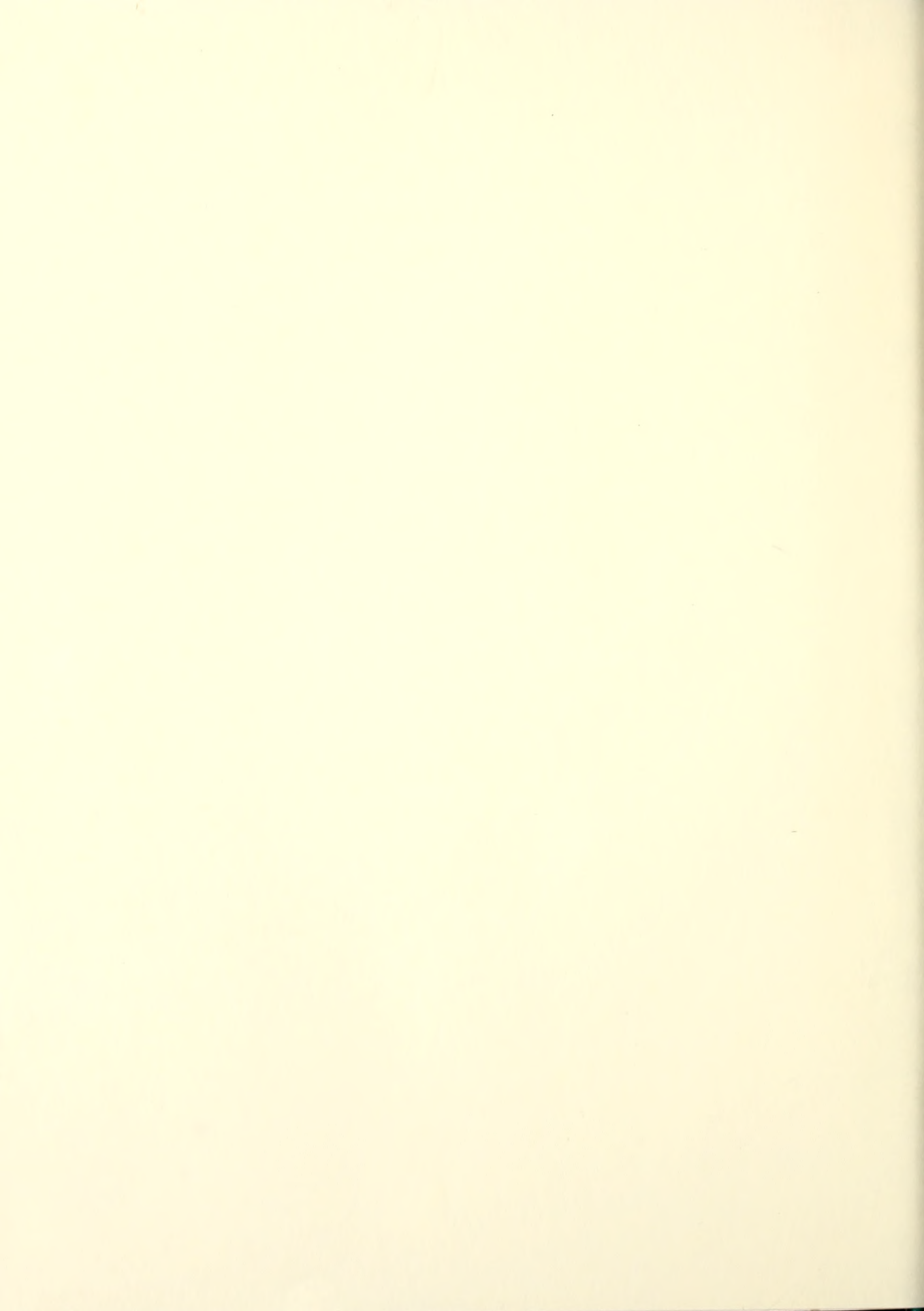
The mansion on that plantation is gone, like all the rest I have been looking for, but the grounds satisfy you. The lake that these plantations surround is as noisy, and as full of "white caps" as the ocean. It is fifteen feet higher than the adjacent river, and has no natural outlet. The earth taken from the canals was used to construct drives along the lake shore; they, too, have trees on each side. They are very tall, and the ivy is so dense around them, that you can hardly see the trunks of some of them, and after growing to the tops of the trees it falls over to the branches of the others, and forms a ceiling of green lace; this is not one place, but along the whole drive as far as we went, and under the trees were thousands of ferns, so taking the drive out, the rest was a tangled mass of different shades of green, both at our feet and above our heads. A lady told me this morning, that had visited

this place before the war, that it seemed nothing but a wreck now. What could it have then? The famous old place of the Clays in Georgia, compares with this place like a star does to the moon. The late Honorable William F. Shepard, who traveled extensively in the southern country, as well as in the north, said that it was the most beautiful plantation he had ever seen.

Matilda M. Kessinger

The above described plantation was the home of Miss Mary Pettigrew, the "Florence Nightingale" of the South During the Civil War. - EDR. Tel.







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